

# AIR COMMANDO

A Professional Publication by the Air Commando Association  
Dedicated to Air Commandos Past, Present & Future

# JOURNAL

# CAA

## Combat Aviation Advisors

## Global Influence of CAA

## Train Advise Assist

## Sri Lankan AF Survival Training

## Secret Wings of the OSS in WWII



Vol 5: Issue 1

Foreword by Norman Brozenick Jr., MGen (Ret)  
and Tom Phillips, CMSgt (Ret)



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# Air Commando JOURNAL

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Combat controllers and pararescuemen from the 720th Operations Support Squadron Advanced Skills Training flight at Hurlburt Field, off-load a UH-1 Huey from the 6th SOS during a combat search and rescue training scenario on the Eglin Air Force Base range. (Photo courtesy of USAF SrA Ali Flisek)



Jerry Klingaman in Laos, 1968

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# FOREWORD



**Lt Col Norman Brozenick, Jr.  
in Uzbekistan 2000**

It is our special privilege to introduce this ACJ issue featuring AFSOC's Combat Aviation Advisors. Comprised of articles written by former and current "CAA," this issue reflects the capability, credibility, and faithfulness of the quiet professionals entrusted with the aviation advisory mission. We hope it provides realistic context and increased clarity regarding CAA and their mission.

Since the stand-up of the 6th Special Operations Squadron in 1994, all officer and enlisted CAA undergo qualification training together. A team-building experience, qualification training tests core values and personal attributes like integrity, excellence, selflessness, accountability, and courage. Tactical scenarios develop skills necessary to operate with confidence while teaming with joint, interagency, and foreign counterparts. Education inspires a personal commitment to master the cultural, political, regional, and language skills required of an effective advisor. Upon graduation, most advisors are assigned to the CAA's primary weapon system – the team!

The CAA team is a multidisciplinary weapon system deployed to accomplish the mission in a specified area of operations. Whether conducting combat advisory operations in a remote location or a strategic airpower assessment in a national capital, CAA are individually and collectively expected to know "what right looks like" and possess the courage to do the right thing. Team members are placed in positions of trust and confidence, often with placement and



**MSgt Tom Phillips in  
Peru 1998**

access to senior foreign military and civilian authorities. They are fundamentally responsible for building relationships, and transitioning them into networked partnerships that accomplish shared security objectives.

The classic tactical mission is to train, advise, and assist aviation forces of friendly governments. CAA teams are task tailored to help foreign counterparts develop, sustain, and employ specialized airpower in special operations roles within irregular warfare environments. At the operational level, CAA create and operate command and control capabilities that integrate and orient foreign aviation forces to achieve assigned objectives with special operations counterparts.

Tactical actors on a strategic stage, CAA practice the art of the long view. Although short-term advancements in foreign aviation capabilities occur, CAA understand that meaningful, lasting progress is years in the making. Success can be masked by changes in politics and policy, and is rightfully veiled by the SOF ethos of ensuring foreign counterparts get the credit. It suffices to say that when the United States achieves a security objective by, with, and through the actions of a friendly government, and those actions were made possible in part by a CAA team, then the team has accomplished its mission.

To all AFSOF advisors, past and present, thank you for developing the relationships, partnerships, and capabilities with friendly nations that quietly helped ensure our freedom. We deeply appreciate your many personal sacrifices and those of your families. And to all those who lost an advisor in training or combat, please know their spirit lives on in the current generation of Combat Aviation Advisors.



Norman J. Brozenick Jr.,  
Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)  
Former AFSOC Vice Commander  
CAA #127



Tom Phillips  
CMSgt USAF (Ret)  
CAA #79



# CHINDIT CHATTER

The first of the five SOF truths of USSOCOM, is “Humans are more important than hardware.” This is one of the basic tenets that all SOF operators and leaders understand and employ day in and day out in this highly volatile world. It is particularly true in the Foreign Internal Defense mission (FID). There are several scholarly definitions of FID but in this issue of the Air Commando Journal you will gain an understanding of AFSOC’s contribution to that mission set as we dedicate this edition to the Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) mission. You will come to understand, why I maintain, that the humans involved in this critical mission area are without doubt the key element of the great successes we are realizing literally around the world.

Between 1998 and 2001, I was fortunate to be assigned to the 16 SOW and during that time I was briefed on what was still a fairly new squadron with a unique mission set, the 6th SOS. I was told that their primary

mission was CAA or the AFSOC portion of FID. That was a quite broad and open ended description and leadership was still learning and, in some cases, defining, what the unit should do. While FID was not a new mission in those years, the Air Commando roles in those mission sets were being redefined and the individual many consider the “godfather” of CAA, Mr Jerry Klingaman, was assisting in that effort by sharing his experiences in FID and writing the doctrine based on his days in the SEA conflict. Without a doubt, the 6th SOS was, and still is, incredibly fortunate to have his wisdom to rely on. He shares his observations and experiences and the development of modern day CAA in a great article on page 9.



It was also during this time that several unique old, foreign aircraft were starting to show up on the ramp. These included strange non-SOF specific airframes such as a DC-3, Russian made helicopters and an AN-32. Eric Huppert provides us with an inside view on how those aircraft were attained to give the new CAA a variety of platforms to gain experience and proficiencies needed to carry forward credibility in training and assisting a wide array of foreign forces.

Modern day CAA requires a vast array of capabilities beyond just the basic training of aircrew and maintainers. The modern day CAA roles are explained and highlighted in a series of articles provided by current 6 SOS and 919 SOW personnel. In addition, there are two superb articles from a couple guys that provide a unique view from the “I was there” perspective. This journal is rounded out by a great heritage piece on Air Force SOF during WWII by Bernie Moore.

All in all, this edition conveys a summary of a somewhat unheralded capability that has evolved in the true “Quiet Professional” mode without any fanfare. You will also come to understand that their successes are absolute necessities going forward in this crazy, mixed up world that we find ourselves living in. The threats we face are many and US SOF is the force of choice across the globe, but cannot do it all alone as a US only effort. We need host nations that are capable of assisting. The great folks serving in the Combat Aviation Advisory role, are making that happen every day. Their ops tempo is off-scale high and there is no relief in sight. Hats off to these great Americans.

As always, we are extremely grateful for all the volunteer authors that I feel have made this a great edition of the Air Commando Journal.

Any Time - Any Place



Dennis Barnett, Col, USAF (Ret)  
*ACA President and Editor In Chief*



## Another Great Publication

Dennis,

A heartfelt thanks to you, Dick Secord and Mike Wooley for what you have done for the ACA. As always, I read the issue from cover to cover. I thoroughly enjoyed Chief William Walter's article. The Chief has done more to perpetuate the past and current contributions to our nation than anyone I know.

You gave me an opening by saying it was "not all inconclusive" so I would like to back it up three years.

I volunteered for the classified gunship program, along with others, mostly from the 317th TAW in Oct. 1969. I was assigned a crew and we trained in AC-119s (no stateside AC-130s) at Lockbourne AFB, OH. We signed into the 16th SOS, 8th TFW, UBON in January 1970. The 16th had 8 AC-130s, converted through Maj Ron Terry's fertile innovation and salesmanship from range support aircraft at Patrick AFB.

1970 was an amazing year for the 16th. During that dry season we accounted for 85 percent of the BDA in Steel Tiger and Barrel Roll. Pretty good, considering there were 72 F-4s each at Ubon, Tackli, Udorn, and Danang fragged with us. Ubon escorts were great (497th, 435th). We had to get 20 trucks for a DFC and they had to get 3. Believe me, we sparkled to clean them off so they did not go home toting ordinance. In that year we averaged 700 rounds of AAA (23, 37, 57) per sortie. In addition to being an IP and FE, I was additional duty squadron maintenance officer. We had an almost permanent party Battle Damage Repair Team from Wright Patterson.

Thanks to Ron Terry and his team we had a lead the force aircraft called Surprise Package. The crew was led by Maj Bill Brooks. Surprise Package was always fragged to the highest threat area in Laos. One night Surprise Package had a fuel leak and its crew went to the Plain Jane spare. We lost them!

I would like to add that I came back to the CONUS during the SEA rainy season to train others in the Pave Pronto modifications (40 mm, Black Crow, 2 KW

light, IR, TV, fire control, and computer mods). All thanks to innovations of Ron Terry, Jimmy Clifford, and others.

My fini flight was in Dec 1970. Since my original crew from Lockbourne were all high time C-130 guys we quickly became instructors, so we seldom flew together. That night in the right seat was my squadron commander LTC Arnold Tucker, the famed Quarter Back from West Point's Blanchard and Davis.

Again, thank you and all for what you do for us.

Robert 'Bob' Patterson,  
Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)  
ACA Life Member 1954

Sir

*Many thanks for the nice note. We always appreciate any feedback on the ACJ and also appreciate your additional information. I also agree with your comments regarding Chief Walter.*

*Thank again and hope to see you in the fall if not sooner!*

v/r

Dennis Barnett

Dennis

We have enjoyed the Air Commando Journal that Pat sent Joe, though we would enjoy it so much more if we only knew what or who Swede Svendsen's No. 2, was...Goonie, Herkie, Mule Train, Honey Badger, and many others! We thought we knew what a Ranch Hand was, a Farm Gate, and we certainly know what a Water Pump is...but it appears to bring a whole new meaning to those who have experienced it in a much deeper sense to protect OUR well being! What a wonderful comrade you all have as you share and reveal in your publication. Kudos to you and your staff! Thanks for sharing! We would love to hear more stories from you about the night vision goggles and others you are able to tell.

Your enlightened family in Kansas,  
Joe and Vicki

Dennis,

I just finished reading the Air Commando Journal and wanted to congratulate you and the entire ACA Team on another fantastic edition and more importantly on taking care of our ACA families.

Your examples of how ACA has helped the Commando community clearly exemplify the great work you do and the difference the ACA makes in the lives of our Air Commando families. Bridging the gap between what the government can do and the needs of families, during a crisis, is critical to the well-being and care for our Air Commando families.

The full page on the Special Operations Warrior Foundation is well done and we are so proud of Breanna and the other 142 children in college today.

We are honored to have such caring partners.

Keep up the great work!

Steven L. McLeary, Maj, USAF (Ret)  
Executive Director, SOWF

Steve,

*Thanks for the exceptionally kind note. You, especially, know that these are truly labors of love and we are proud to be considered partners with such an outstanding organization as SOWF!! We look forward to more opportunities to team together in the future.*

v/r

Dennis Barnett

## B-26Ks to the Congo

Received the Air Commando Journal today and was immediately attracted to the article on the B-26Ks in the Congo. I was also there in the summer of 1964 as a C-130E navigator from the 777 Troop Carrier Squadron, 464th TCW, Pope AFB, NC. We were part of JTF Leo made up of four C-130Es and five crews plus a maintenance contingent and a platoon from the 82nd Airborne for security. We spent three weeks there in June with JTF Leo and then were back in November as

part of Operation Dragon Rouge with a squadron of C-130Es and a Belgian Paracommando unit that the USAF C-130s dropped on Stanleyville and Paulus to rescue hostages taken by the Simba rebels. The 464 TCW received the McKay Trophy for Dragon Rouge. We weren't Air Commandos but the Troop Carrier crews of that era were the next best thing. Shortly after this we started receiving silver "Combat Talons" at Pope and flew them as airlifters until they went back to Lockheed and then came back as black birds.

To the point about the B-26Ks. We saw them both at Leopoldville and at Kamena where we saw what appeared to be training taking place – practice strafing runs on a range next to the field. There seemed to be a USAF major in an unmarked flight suit in charge plus the Cuban pilots.

William L. Whitaker,  
Col, USAF (Ret)  
HQ AFSOC/LG 1991-92  
ACA Life Member 0095



**Standing with the "Mouse" are Maj Sigel Dickman, Gustavo Ponzosa, and Maurice Bourne. Maj Dickman was the B-26 Squadron Commander and the leader on the Congo mission.** (Photo courtesy of Maurice Bourne and Leif Hellström.)

I add my congratulations to you and all the folks who are making the Air Commando Journal such a fine publication. Each edition brings back great memories. For instance, in the latest edition (Vol. 4, Issue 3) I really

enjoyed Maurice Brown's article, "B-26s to the Congo." My family and I PCSed to Howard AFB, CZ, in the summer of 1964 about the same time this deployment to the Congo occurred so I missed getting the details first hand. The mention of John Slauson, one of the B-26 pilots, really jump started my memories. My wife and I and John and his family arrived at Hurlburt in early 1961 from MATS C-118 assignments at McGuire AFB, NJ. We were in that first group of volunteers for the 4400 CCTS. We were both assigned to the SC-47s because of our C-118 experience. John had a true warrior's heart and balked; he really wanted to be in the B-26. How he made that happen without getting court-martialed is a great story that he should tell.

Bill Castlen, Lt Col, USAF, (Ret)  
ACA Lifemember

*Bill,  
Thanks for your very nice note. We are glad the ACJ rekindles so many great memories!*

v/r  
Dennis Barnett

## Background on B-26s to the Congo

My father Robert O. Denny was one of the founders of On Mark Engineering, the company that produced the upgraded B-26K aircraft that were central to the article "B-26s to the Congo" in ACJ Vol 4, Issue 3. In 2011, I gave a presentation at the Nimrod reunion that covered the history of the B-26K, the company, and of my father who was a 75th Fighter Squadron Flying Tiger in China. I attended the 2011 ACA banquet as the guest of Nimrod Col (Ret) Roger Graham.

I recently joined the ACA as Associate member, and incredibly, I received my ACA packet last week and my welcome letter had been inserted into ACJ within the B-26 article! I was 17 years old at the time and I vividly recall

this event. Having lots of co-pilot time in the civilian On Mark 26's, I tried to get in on the delivery but no luck. The only USAF name I recall is that of Capt Dan Grob, who I believe did some acceptance testing and/or flew the first K Model from



**Robert O. Denny and his son Robert B. Denny in a civilian On Mark 26.** (Photo courtesy of Robert 'Bob' Denny.)

Van Nuys to Hurlburt. At the time, the whole thing was mysterious. Apparently a call was made to get as many K Models down to Eglin as quickly as possible. I was not told where the birds were going until many years later when my dad told me. He's gone now, and I'm unsure if he ever knew any details of the Congo operation itself.

Needless to say, I was thrilled to learn what happened to those K Models, and about the operation as well as the people who flew and maintained them. I'm looking forward to attending the Nimrod and ACA events this year.

Respectfully,  
Robert B. Denny  
Mesa, AZ

*Submissions can be e-mailed to [info@aircommando.org](mailto:info@aircommando.org) or mailed to Hot Wash c/o Air Commando Association, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569. ACA reserves the right to eliminate those that are not deemed appropriate. Thank you in advance for your interest in the Air Commando Journal.*



# CAA

## The Origins and Concept of Train-Advise-Assist

By Jerry Klingaman, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

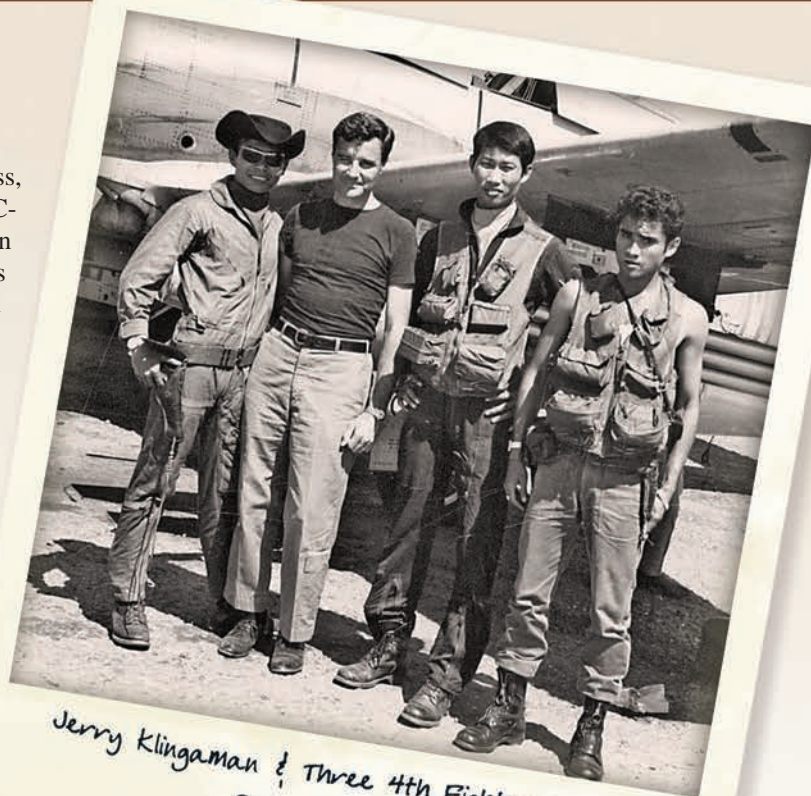
### Introduction

As this issue of Air Commando Journal goes to press, an Air Force Train-Advise-Assist Command-Air (TACC-Air), NATO, is supporting the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan. According to a 12 March 2016 US Air Forces Central Command public release, the TACC-Air team, located at Kandahar Air Base, is “working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Afghan Air Force to develop a professional, capable and sustainable force.” Further descriptions of the effort suggest that they are applying a wide range of training and advising skills to boost the Afghan Air Force up to effective fighting condition for joint actions against hostile forces within that country. Personnel performing these duties are known within the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) as “combat aviation advisors” (CAA).

The TACC-Air unit was created as an air expeditionary force employing Afghan aircraft to meet specific strategic ends, so it will deactivate when the mission ends. But the operational concept and mission set were not recently invented for this one-time gig in the Middle East.

The TACC-Air enterprise was modeled to some extent on AFSOC’s 6th Special Operations Squadron (6 SOS), presently based at Duke Field, Florida, but the train-advise-assist mission set currently resident within the 6 SOS, is anything but new. The 6th, itself, is modeled on previous Air Force special-operations expeditions to build and sustain foreign aviation capabilities. So how far back does the CAA train-advise-assist mission reach? That’s not easy to pin down, but one thing is certain: It pre-dates the 6th SOS by at least a half century.

The CAA concept certainly dates back to the war in Southeast Asia (without being called CAA), but equally interesting is the story of how train-advise-assist capabilities were shut down at the end of the war in Southeast Asia and resurrected at the end of 1992 to meet real-world mission needs, but we’ll touch on that later.



Jerry Klingaman & Three 4th Fighter Sq Pilots  
Pakse Laos, 1968



RLAF AT-28 Flight Line  
Pakse, Laos 1969



## The Early Years

An early example of foreign training and advisory actions might be a small Army Air Corps contingent operating in China--shortly after America's entry into the war in the Pacific and the departure of Chennault's flying Tigers--to build and sustain a Chinese Nationalist P-40 fighter force. It is probably safe to say, however, that train-advise-assist efforts with foreign aviation forces did not rise to prominence until almost the mid-point of the war in Southeast Asia.

At the beginning of hostilities in Vietnam, Tactical Air Command

under the code name "Farm Gate." The deploying force was tasked to function in a training and advisory capacity with the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF), but the war in Vietnam was advancing too quickly for that to happen. It might have been an opportunity to prepare the VNAF to defend the Republic, but it didn't work out that way. The "training" was a complete fiction and cover story. VNAF crews were hardly going to fly Jungle Jim aircraft, and the VNAF didn't need much training. They were flying Grumman F8-F Bearcats, and any of them still alive after six months in that airplane could

was eventually established. It was after formation of the 1 ACW that AFSOF advisory operations really came into their own. In 1964, the wing was tasked to support a new and very different kind of mission--Project 404 in Laos. The project, itself, fell under the Air Force Personnel designation "Palace Dog," a program for augmenting the office of the Air Attaché, Vientiane, Laos. It was the cover name for 179-day Air Force TDY deployments supporting covert advisory operations in Laos. This is essentially how it worked:

Under policy guidance by the American Ambassador to Laos, Project 404 included training, advising, and assisting the Royal Lao Air Force (RLAF) in tactical air operations as well as keeping the RLAF Air Operations Centers (AOC) in fighting condition for the defense of Laos. Because the 1954 Geneva Accords outlawed the presence of foreign forces in the Kingdom of Laos, this effort was conducted covertly.

This adventure began in 1964, when the CIA and Air Attaché set up an AOC at Vientiane, Laos, and then brokered an agreement with the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) to assemble a small AT-28 attack force of RTAF pilots and aircraft at Udorn Air Base, Thailand. The aircraft actually belonged to an Air Force training unit at Udorn AB--code named Water Pump--that produced day-VFR-qualified RLAF pilots.

Thailand was not a participant in the war, so the RTAF pilots, referred to as the "B-Team," could not launch combat sorties from Thailand. Instead, every morning, the B-team flew AT-28's not required to meet the daily Water Pump training schedule to the AOC at Vientiane to conduct bombing raids into North Laos. They returned to Udorn AB every evening before dark. An Air Force AOC team living in Vientiane supported AT-28 combat launches and recoveries during the day.

The Air Force AOC team, averaging 15 people, was assembled from different sources. The Vientiane AOC Commander was a 1 ACW asset deployed in country for 179 days TDY. The author served in this capacity from September 1966 to February 1967. The rest of the AOC contingent consisted of a wide range of



**Author and RTAF B-Team at Wattay Airport, Vientiane, Laos 1966** (Photo courtesy of Jerry Klingaman.)

(TAC) formed an elite unit capable of conducting counterinsurgency operations to blunt Soviet support of guerrilla forces conducting "wars of national liberation." This small unit of Air Commandos (nicknamed Jungle Jim) was activated in April 1961 as the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS). The first, and most famous, of the many deployments this unit would make into Vietnam was carried out in November 1961

probably fly anything. During the early days, Army Special Forces were big into the train-advise-assist role; the Air Force was not.

## Project 404

The 4400th CCTS became a Group in March 1962 and one month later, it became the 1st Air Commando Wing (1 ACW). A parent command, the Air Force Special Operations Force (AFSOF),

highly-experienced, volunteer Air Force support specialists, including aircraft and engine maintenance, munitions experts, bomb loaders, aircraft electricians, communications, and medical. These individuals were recruited from Air Force flying units around Thailand. The team operated covertly in civilian clothes and with no personal identification. Their existence was subject to denial by the United States Government.

AFSOF advisors were also imbedded with an RLAf AT-28 fighter squadron at Luang Prabang in North central Laos. This single RLAf squadron conducted strikes against enemy positions from different launch bases in Laos. By the end of 1967, the RLAf launch bases at Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, and Pakse were turned into full AOC's, complete with AT-28's, RLAf pilots, and Air Force advisors. An AOC was added later at the secret CIA base of Long Chien in the North. The RLAf pilots were known collectively as the "C-Team."

The combined success of the RLAf AT-28 squadrons and their Air Force advisors was crucial to achieving US Strategic goals, specifically to maintain the status quo in Laos while seeking a favorable conclusion to the war in Vietnam. The RLAf AT-28's and USAFSOF teams, together, held the line and supported these goals until massive invasions by North Vietnamese ground forces brought the wars in Vietnam and Laos to an end. Up until then, the RLAf AT-28's were the main factor preventing an enemy overrun of the most populous, government-controlled areas during the Lao dry season.

Advisory team composition for Project 404 at the RLAf AOC's consisted partly of an AOC Commander, maintenance line chief, radio operator, and an enlisted Physician Assistant deployed 179 days TDY from AFSOF. The author served as AOC Commander at Pakse from October 1968 to April 1969. Because of a motorcycle accident killing the lead Lao pilot, the author functioned as squadron commander of the RLAf 4th Fighter Squadron at Pakse, working directly for General Phasouk S. Rassaphak, Commander of Military Region 4.

The rest of the team was made

up of PACAF specialists deployed TDY from bases in Thailand to furnish the other critical skills--typically an engine mechanic, aircraft electrician, and munitions specialist. The AOC advisors worked directly with their RLAf counterparts, the personnel doing the actual work. Project 404 manning of the five RLAf AOC's was the first



**Author (looking at camera) with Air Force AOC Team during end-of-day hot-wash.** (Photo courtesy of Jerry Klingaman.)

clear example of compositely-structured train-advise-assist teams directly supporting US strategic objectives by, with, and through the aviation forces of another country. Interestingly, the specialty-composition of these teams still furnishes a model for 21st century CAA deployments.

In late 1967, there was an interesting (and instructive) change in the manning policy for the AOC's. At the insistence of the TAC Commander, all AFSOF Project 404 personnel were replaced by PACAF assets, beginning in the spring of 1967. But one year later, it was apparent that drawing personnel out of conventional Air Force units and assigning them extremely demanding advisory tasks in this austere, covert working environment, was not working, especially when dealing with temperamental personalities in the Lao fighter squadrons.

The advisory positions required enormous independence of action and mature, innovative thinking in such

a politically sensitive, highly-fluid combat environment. This is precisely the operating environment that AFSOF forces were originally designed for, and which was anathema to the TAC Commander. The critical element was, and still is, the individual, not the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). Moreover, there is a very real sense in which, what

we now call, CAA capabilities lie at the very heart of special operations--building joint, combined partner-nation capacity in the special operations arena, directly supporting US Strategic foreign policy objectives.

In late October, 1968, at the American Ambassador's insistence, AFSOF Air Commandos moved back into both the RLAf AOC's and the Vientiane AOC for the RTAF B-Team. AFSOF was now filling the four previously-mentioned positions at all five AOC's, augmented by PACAF assets where required. The AFSOF CAA teams continued operations in Laos until they were withdrawn in 1973, along with all US combat forces in Southeast Asia.

### **Project 404 Lessons Learned**

If anything of lasting value came out of the Project 404 experience, it was the lessons on how to support small foreign air force combat units, and how to field an advisory team under combat conditions.





**The author with three 4th Fighter Squadron pilots at Pakse Laos, 1968.** (Photo courtesy of Jerry Klingaman.)

The lessons were many. The RLAF AT-28 pilots, for instance, had no operable parachutes, no functional survival gear, and no survival radios, and there were no available rescue resources who even knew these people existed. The AT-28-qualified AOC Commanders threw their lot in with the RLAF pilots under the same conditions. None of us gave much thought to the situation at that time, but we were all young and immortal and fully task oriented. Besides, there was nothing we could do about it; we were under control and supervision of the American Embassy through the office of the Air Attaché, and he was not a logistics source.

What was of concern to me as Commander at the Pakse AOC, was that none of our Project 404 teams were trained in advisory operations, local culture, language, tactical weapons use, or defensive ground actions, and the teams were often surrounded by hostile forces. Some people carried battered up, scrounged weapons of foreign origin, but even if someone did issue personal weapons, the team members, by and large, were not trained to fight defensively.

Typically, team members would arrive at the AOC operating site not knowing each other, and most of them were unprepared for the mission. It took about six months operating in the open, with no electricity, water, or overhead shelter, to really get it together as a seasoned, experienced outfit, and then it was time to go home for a break. Later, the 1st ACW would build up another team from different units around the base, and deploy them to Laos--again, without any of them knowing each other, much less having trained together. What made it work, after a fashion, and I hope this doesn't offend anybody too much, was the SOF mindset that was infused into the team

by the AFSOF-sourced AOC Commanders and the three other AFSOF specialists.

I clearly remember vowing at the time that if I ever got the chance to change this ad hoc way of deploying CAA teams, I would do so. I never imagined that the opportunity would eventually present itself, but it did--twice. My first effort was after the Pakse tour when I moved to HQ AFSOF as Director of Operations Plans. I wrote a detailed concept of operations white paper for building professionally-trained AFSOF advisory teams possessing internal identity, and which could quickly adapt and survive at remote locations in lesser-developed nations. But the war was winding down, and many suspected that AFSOF would be dismantled, since this would be the end of "operations short of war." Irregular warfare would belong to history, or so they thought. So, when I left



**RTF B-Team, Wattay Airfield, Laos, after bombing mission in North Laos.** (Photo courtesy of Jerry Klingaman.)

PCS for Bangkok in 1971, the white paper, which was classified, was destroyed.

## Post Southeast Asia

When our involvement in the war ended in 1973, US special operations forces were drastically downsized. AFSOF was almost entirely eliminated; a single A-37 squadron was left standing. Reality quickly settled back in, however, and the Government realized that irregular warfare was not going out of style. The A-37's went away, and the force slowly reformed with AC-130 gunships, C-130 Combat Talons, MH-53 Pave Lows, and MH-60 search and rescue helicopters. With this mix of aircraft, there was no room for a train-advise-assist capability to work with lesser-developed partner nations where irregular, regional warfare was growing in both scope and intensity.

Throughout the 1973 - 1993 time frame, Army SF personnel were training and advising foreign combat forces in irregular warfare tactics, but no one was training their counterpart aviation support units. So, the host-nation ground guys had no ride to the target. And no one in the Air Force or AFSOF cared except for a very small group of officers in Headquarters ASFOF who were focused on rebuilding a train-advise-assist capability.

In 1984, I was a civilian Senior Research Fellow in the CADRE at Maxwell AFB writing an Air Force Doctrine For Foreign Internal Defense (FID), a logical precursor to building a dedicated, train-advise-assist capability. I was going to try it one more time. People in the Pentagon told me it would never be published. In late 1989, Maj Scott Murphy called me from Hurlburt Field asking for a discussion in my office, so I blocked two hours for him. He arrived and told me about the plan being quietly hatched within HQ AFSOC/XP. Two days later, going 8 hours per day with him, we roughly mapped out a preliminary course of action--opened an office with a half dozen principal operators, wrote a white paper concept of operations, and found contacts in the Theater Combatant Commands to identify requirements. In 1990, I briefed the draft doctrine at a Commando Rally chaired by the AFSOC Commander Maj Gen Tom Eggers. When it was over, there was tacit agreement to proceed with an office and small staff to explore the concept further. USSOCOM also approved the concept.

The initial cadre, organized as AFSOC/XPF, was given an open bay in a small wooden structure built by German POW's during WWII. It was scheduled for demolition, but it was a start. Lt Col Steve Whitson was placed in charge, and Scott Murphy joined him. Time rocked on, more people were added, and during the summer of 1992, a

## ***THE VALUE OF SUPPORTING THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES.***

*For all that you do, we are forever in  
your debt.*

## ***THE VALUE OF PERFORMANCE.***

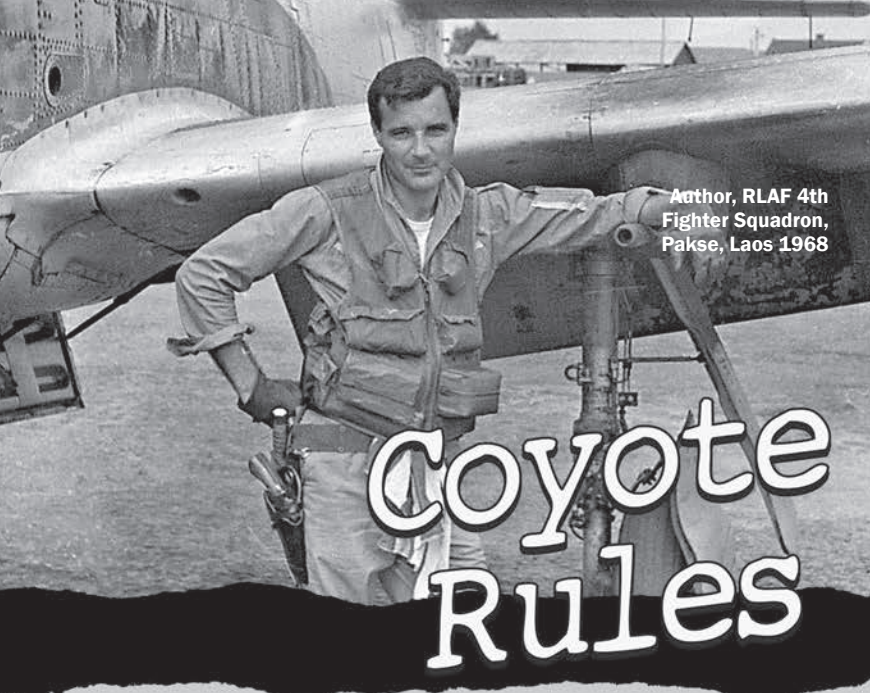
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Author, RLAF 4th  
Fighter Squadron,  
Pakse, Laos 1968

# Coyote Rules

1. If you run with the pack, play by pack rules, but keep your options open.
2. When you hunt alone, stealth is your best hope. You may only get one try.
3. Know the terrain cold, especially the escape routes.
4. Do not depend on others for ideas; they are rarely available.
5. Have your own ideas and keep plenty of them in reserve. Develop instincts.
6. Where instinct fails, build plans. Define your objectives. Refine your methods.
7. Success has three phases: extensive planning, exhaustive rehearsal, and swift execution.
8. If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn't plan it properly.
9. Don't take stupid chances. Surviving is a professional endeavor.
10. Consider the consequences of your acts. Survival of the pack may be at stake.
11. Have a back-up plan if things go wrong. Keep it simple.
12. Know your limits and when to quit. If you can't kill two geese, kill one and make it home.
13. Most of us come to grief because we want too much.
14. If you run with bad dogs, you get shot with them.
15. Most traps are set on trails that are already out of bounds.
16. If you suspect you're out of bounds, you probably are.
17. Give quarter where it's due. You may need it yourself someday.
18. Never assume that no one wants you dead.
19. Threats rarely announce themselves. Stay alert. Anticipate the unexpected.
20. Be ready to move on if the game gives out.

Why the Coyote Rules? Good question, since they came together so late in my life. But they are really for friends and colleagues in the special operations community. I had already suffered cruelly from my own naiveté and feeble sense of self-preservation. In my view, such aphorisms are neither true nor false. They are merely ancient artifacts of life and survival at their most basic. They help us hunt, but they also remind us of our own vulnerability.

*Best Regards To All Air Commandos – Jerry K.*

USSOCOM-sponsored XPF controlled proof-of-concept mission was deployed to Honduras. And now the enterprise carried the parent-command imprimatur.

I joined the unit in January 1993 as Director of Strategy and Plans about the time the Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Doctrine was actually approved and published. We were given cast-off Macintosh computers for writing documents, and M-16 parts were scrounged at base reclamation for assembly on the floor of the open bay. The wives made curtains for the room. We chose Spanish as our first unit language, and XPF people lacking the requisite skill, including me, attended Spanish language classes on base. We put some small advisory teams out the door for Latin America and the Near East, and lived from one AFSOC weekly briefing to the next. Our life expectancy as a unit was about five working days. The train-advise-assist mission was not understood very well. Some people actually saw it as a threat to the purity of the command.

Quite frankly, we were surrounded by a lot of enemies and indifferent people, but a few key figures in the right positions understood and believed in our potential. As soon as unit strength reached a certain magic number, we were upgraded from a three-digit office to a Flight under the 1 SOW, and then, at 50 people, to a squadron. Clay McCutchan, AFSOC historian, came over to the old wooden building and asked what unit designation we wanted. I had trained in AT-28's with the 6th SOS before deploying to Pakse in 1968, so I said "the 6th." And that was it.

To this day, I'm surprised we survived, but we did. Army SF found out that we could bring host-nation air into combined exercises, and, if necessary, we could do the same for the real show. Requests for AFSOC training and advisory teams started rolling in from the theater Special Operation Commands, but there was a problem getting the mission statement right. AFSOC said our mission was to train foreign aviation forces. But that is illegal if not funded under Security Assistance, so we got it up-graded to train and advise. We wanted to add assist, but that was a bridge too far, and it was disapproved at first because it raised the possibility of someone getting into a combat situation.

In all fairness, the train-advise-assist concept was something very new to the senior leadership. The mission is not as intuitive as flying an airplane, and people knew the squadron did not have advanced field-craft training. The idea of advisory teams finding themselves in harm's way when working with a foreign military force was not generally popular outside the squadron. The



concept of risk versus strategic gain had to be clearly spelled out: If an advisor cannot step with a host-nation aircrew and help them carry out a joint, combined mission, the friendly force may not engage if they want your guidance onboard the aircraft and can't have it. So, in that case, AFSOC advisors would essentially bring nothing to the fight, and US Navy Seals and SF troops will not get on board a foreign aircraft without them. And there will likely be cases where an AFSOC aircraft will not be the weapon of choice. This was eventually recognized, and the mission was upgraded again to train-advise-assist, but not until some changes were made.

## Updating the CAA Force

In time, as America's involvement with friendly partner nations increased in the irregular warfare arena, the Command's small advisory force was increasingly viewed as a distinct, high pay-off special operations entity with unique needs and capabilities. It was unique enough for the force to earn the title Combat Aviation Advisors. First and foremost, the principal lesson learned from Laos is that an adequately-trained, coherently-structured team is required to make it work. In the old Air Commando days, a small team of aircrew members would deploy to a foreign site only to find out that there were no airplanes to fly because there was no local aircraft maintenance capability, and the AFSOF team had no organic maintenance or logistics training or advising skills. The team must be trained together to fit its primary geographic area of responsibility, and possess a composite mix of skills to address critical core capabilities and tasks that make any flying unit viable.

In the larger context of things, a CAA squadron's principal weapon system is the CAA team, not the unit-assigned aircraft. People who have never experienced the CAA mission sometime have a hard time getting their minds wrapped around this notion. CAA functions and goals must be aimed at the highest possible strategic pay-off. The teams, for example, are not designed to teach people how to fix widgets, but rather on how to build systems to fix widgets. The idea is to build infrastructure and instill self sufficiency. This idea was considered during the old Air Commando days, but there was never time to act on it.

As time went on, AFSOC's CAA teams found themselves operating with SF forces closer to the scene of action and not on Air Force bases guarded by dedicated security forces. Living forward with the host-nation or SF teams often results in CAA teams mounting their own self defense. And that requires a specialized, robust course of training. The 6th SOS solved this issue by creating, internally, an Integrated Skills Training course that prepared every man and woman subject to deployment to move, shoot, and communicate, navigate on the ground at night, and plan their own emergency extractions. The course included extensive training in country-team coordination, low-profile presence, and combat advisory techniques and procedures.

An extended use of this training was employed in 2006 when the squadron trained 200 members of an Air Force contingent deploying as separate teams to multiple locations in Iraq. Air Force site commanders in Iraq reported back that

these individuals "hit the ground running and knew what to do when they arrived."

The squadron took the initiative in 2001 to acquire foreign aircraft representative of those its deployed teams would be working with. HQ AFSOC approved this initiative and the squadron began training geographically-oriented teams in airframes peculiar to the target countries. That was a quantum leap in preparedness. Eric Huppert discusses that initiative elsewhere in this issue of the Air Commando Journal.



**1993 photo of the original home of the 6th SOS when it was reactivated as a Flight under the 1st SOW at Hurlburt Field. This battered-up old shack is a lesson in not taking anything for granted.** (Photo courtesy of Jerry Klingaman.)

So, how does our present CAA force compare to AFSOF capabilities back in the "good old days?" Well, many of us had a good time back then, although our fortunes were often a matter of luck. But I can tell you this: We were professionals then, just as we are now, but the differences between now and then hardly bear comparison. We made it up as we went in Laos. Today, AFSOC regularly fields regionally-oriented, language capable teams who are politically mature and who can function for extended periods of time at remote locations with foreign forces and operate jointly with Army Special Forces.

And let me say something about being lucky. Luck is not always a random wave of the wand; the good, dependable kind of luck is when opportunity and preparedness come together with the willingness to act. That's the way our young CAA men and women are trained to present themselves to the world.



*About the Author: Jerry Klingaman served 22 years on active duty in the Air Force, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1976. He flew a variety of aircraft including the T-33, F-84F and F-100D. He joined the Air Commandos in 1965, flying the C-47, AT-28, and O-1. After retirement he served eight years as Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education, at Maxwell AFB, focusing mainly on irregular warfare doctrine and special operations. He also served as Professor of Regional and Warfare Studies at the Air War College before joining the (now) 6th SOS in 1993, retiring again after 15 years in the unit.*

“

Why can't they  
just buy one  
aircraft and take  
turns flying it?

”

— President Calvin  
Coolidge (Referring to the  
Army Air Corps request for  
more Jennys)

# HOW THE 6TH SOS **ACQUIRED** AIRCRAFT

*By Eric Huppert, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)*

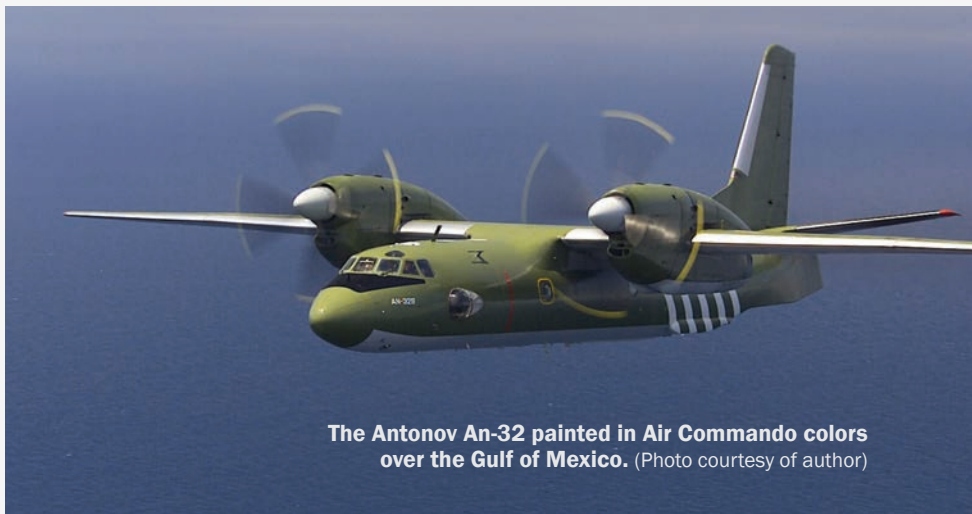
It was the spring of 1999, and I was walking down the street in front of what was then the library at Hurlburt Field, going to get some lunch. Taking a break from the CV-22 program office, I was pondering what to do next for an assignment, as the Personnel gods had once again decided that my assignment to an actual CV-22 was not going to happen. I had been working in the program office after returning from an exchange tour with the Royal Air Force (RAF). At the time, my sole career objective was to remain flying. I had done a two-year staff tour at HQ AFSOC prior to going to the RAF, and I was determined to avoid more Headquarters time again. The problem was no one would believe me when I said I wanted to stay in the cockpit. With my initial plans thwarted, what the heck was I going to do?

Lifting my eyes off the sidewalk, I met Grant Harden coming the other way. Grant was a Pave guy; we had gotten to know each other years before at the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) in Kuwait City just after the First Gulf War. We talked a bit and it turned out that he was the Director of Operations of a unit I had never heard of that did things I didn't understand, but he said they needed fixed-wing guys to build their flying program. That was all I needed to hear. When he said he'd have me, I did an about face, walked back to the office and hounded my boss about letting me go (I will be forever in debt to Jonathan Jay for allowing me to do so) then went straight to the HQ AFSOC Department of Personnel office. A couple of weeks later I found myself staring at the possibility of building an aviators' playground as a Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) in the 6th Special Operations Squadron. (Editor's note: See page 9 of this issue for a full understanding of the CAA mission)

At the time, the 6th was equipped with a couple of UH-1N helicopters which were semi-applicable to the mission. Most of the nations we were working with were using the single-engine UH-1Hs, but the twin-engined N-models were readily available from the "big blue" Air Force, so that's what we got. On the fixed-wing side, all of the combat advisory operations at the time were with C-130 units, but for some unknown reason, we were equipped with Casa 212s. It would be another two years before we purloined the 16th Special Operations Wing's "slick" Herk to maintain our C-130 proficiency. (There was a battle to be allowed to fly Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) in that particular aircraft which was also an interesting journey—not until we pointed out that regular Air Mobility Command units were actually flying "slicks" while using NVGs did we begin to gain traction for that argument, but that's another story.)

When I arrived at the unit, the 6th was organized into three geographically-oriented flights: Central Command (CENTCOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCAM) and Pacific Command (PACOM). But there was also a new European Command (EUCOM) flight standing up, and it was there that I was assigned. In the spring of 1999, the squadron contained combat advisor teams made up of fixed and rotary-wing pilots,

maintainers, security forces, Special Tactics, communications, intelligence and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) instructors. Deployments were structured around providing training to foreign air forces in most of the things we did in the US Air Force, emphasizing the necessity for integrating all the elements of an air arm to accomplish national objectives. However, none of the "host nation" air forces we worked with were equipped with Combat Talons, Gunships or Pave Lows—seems hard to believe now that in those days the only three types of aircraft stationed at Hurlburt.



**The Antonov An-32 painted in Air Commando colors over the Gulf of Mexico.** (Photo courtesy of author)

One of the things we pondered most was how we were supposed to be instructors in aircraft we had never flown, to people whose first language was often not English? That was part of the reason our selection and training process was so rigorous. For the helicopter guys, it wasn't too terribly difficult to resurrect their Huey skills. We had a mixture of really sharp MH-53 and MH-60 guys and some who had come directly from the UH-1N, plus everyone had flown them during Undergraduate Helicopter Pilot Training. But for the fixed-wing crowd, flying the Casa 212 wasn't exactly providing the skill set we needed. It was a fun airplane, especially in the dirt at the range, and it did keep our heads in the flying game, but none of the countries we were working with in PACOM or EUCOM flew the same type of aircraft. So, other than allowing us to keep earning flight pay, I never considered the Casa 212 of much use mission-wise.

About two weeks after I arrived in the squadron, I was sitting in the EUCOM flight cubicle alone—everyone else had gone home. I was staring at a white board used to list the current flight commander's priorities. Under the "AIRCRAFT" column, it was blank. Knowing we were being asked to provide training to new, ex-Soviet nations equipped with Mi-series helicopters and Antonovs, I began to scheme. I picked up the blue marker and wrote:

"Mi-17"  
 "An-26"  
 "An-28"  
 "An-32"  
 "Mx & aircrew"

For effect, I added ("AFSOC-approved") at the bottom of



the column, and walked out.

The next day I made sure I was around for the discussion that I knew would take place. The flight commander was one of our most capable advisors, but as a USAF maintenance officer he was only vaguely familiar with the types of aircraft that now filled in the blank space on his board. True to the character of the 6th SOS though, he jumped into the “how-the-heck-are-we-gonna-do-this” problem with an attitude not affected by his Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). There once had actually been a sign above the squadron entrance that said, “Check your weapons system at the door.” We rarely engaged in the rivalry based on aircraft type seen elsewhere in the USAF, probably because in the 6th, more than anywhere else, everyone got to see how each individual fit into the plan every day and in every operation. We relied on each other constantly, regardless of where we came from.

In the end, it was the obvious that my writings on the board fixed the problem. (Or started it, depending on your perspective.) It would take years of hard work and perseverance to gain permission and build tactical flying programs for each aircraft, take them on the road, and form the basis for keeping the squadron alive and effective beyond all of our expectations, except for Jerry Klingaman of course. He never doubted it for a moment. Obviously someone was flying them somewhere, and somebody else had trained them to do so. Now all we had to do was convince AFSOC that we needed to be proficient in the aircraft that we were going to be instructing in, plus get the education we needed and, finally, how to find the money to do it.

Many challenges awaited us including cold receptions from Russia to our overtures for training in St. Petersburg, extreme difficulty in trying to work permissions from India, and finally taking a chance on a Canadian company called Concord XXI to coordinate training in Ukraine. (Our adventures in Ukraine are best saved for another time.)



**The first-ever “non-standard” aircraft touches down at Hurlburt in 2000.** (Photo courtesy of author)

In the end, based on Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) inputs about what platforms their Special Forces ground advisors most often saw, (and were riding on with no idea of airworthiness), we decided on the Mi-17, the An-26 and the An-32. On a side note: it wasn’t until 2007 that the US Army developed and required procedures for airworthiness authority—by tail number—for every single Mi-17 they would be asked to fly on by any host nation. Next, we went to training

at the State Flight Academy of Ukraine at Kirovograd for the AN-26 and An-32, and the Kremenchuk Flight College for the Mi-17. The shortest briefing I ever gave in the 6th was to HQ AFSOC requesting permission to attend that training. I think everyone thought it would be just like going to Little Rock AFB or Kirtland AFB; good thing they did.

All of this was made possible because the 6th SOS was fortunate enough to have a budget guru who knew the various “colors” of money and how best to utilize them when they were needed to attain the funding required. His squadron nickname is Papa Joe and he is still doing his magic at the 6th. If there are present day squadron DOs or Commanders that have budget issues and could use some sound advice, contact Papa Joe. Just make sure you watch your own wallet!

The first aircraft that we obtained was our Mi-17. It arrived on a gray day in early 2001 on the east side of the airfield. Imagine having only rudimentary experience in a helicopter whose rotor blades go around the wrong way, whose gauges were in kilometers per hour (kph) and meters, not-to-mention instrumentation marked in a foreign language, and whose navigation system consisted of a Russian VHF Omnidirectional Range (VOR) system and add in a clock that was accurate sometimes. Now take all that and build a program from scratch to fly split-second timing, tactical operations at night like the rest of AFSOC. That’s what these folks did and I will leave it to some of our helicopter wizards to chronicle the early days of Mi-17 flying around the Florida panhandle.

The second aircraft to show up on the ramp was our An-32. Funny how easy and cheap it was back in those days, without a System Program Office (SPO), a small contracting squadron, and zero defense contractors in between us and the vendor. We paid \$300k per year for the An-32!

The An-32 was flown in by a Moldovan crew who stayed on for six months to “instruct” us. Our twin turboprop monster was the strangest thing ever to roar into a parking spot on November row. Later, I had the aircraft painted olive green with five white stripes to commemorate the very first Army Air Force special operations aircraft flown by American Air Commandos Colonels Cochran and Alison of the 1st Air Commando Group.

Regarding that lineage and adaptation by the 6th, we were fortunate that two men, Herb Mason and Clay McCutchan in the AFSOC History office, were stalwart supporters. Clay was responsible for bringing the 6th moniker back to life, having provided the original 1st Air Commando Group squadron patch as a choice to Jerry Klingaman and the first squadron commander, Steve Whitson. Clay also provided me with a host of pictures of P-51 Mustangs, B-25 Mitchells, C-46 Commandos and C-47 Sky Trains, all painted with the five white stripes on the olive green background. Some folks say that only those “in the know” could understand that the five white stripes formed four olive green stripes in between, for a total of nine, an undercover symbol for the classified name for the original Air Commandos: Project Nine.

During the early days of Project Nine, original C-47 crews painted the stripes and a Question Mark on their tails because they were tired of being asked about the large glider tow hook

beneath the airplane that they couldn't talk about. Remember, training for Operation Broadway took place well before towing gliders was common knowledge, brought about by D-Day invasion practice. The 6th SOS still sports the stripes and the Question Mark on its airplanes and elsewhere because we were also tired of people asking us what we did!

After working the lineage, it was now time to actually start the training process. The very first mission with the An-32 was planned as a short 1.5-hour sortie to get used to the aircraft again. It had been about five months since we returned from Ukraine, and I was up almost all night the night before. I only had ten total hours in the aircraft, (all we could afford in training), and I didn't want to look too stupid when I climbed back in. Because I didn't want too much confusion on that first flight I was the only student. We had our Moldovan Flight Engineer (FE) and navigator on board. The plan was to fly east down the coast to Panama City to get the feel of the airplane again, turn north to do some basic airwork, then head back towards Crestview, and finally return triumphantly to Hurlburt. Ah, the best laid plans...

First, Eglin Approach Control did not understand what type of aircraft we were. This should not have mattered, but for some reason it did to the military controller and he wouldn't leave me alone. Little did he know I was trying to read Russian instruments, listen to Russian from my instructor while blowing his cigarette smoke away, remember where the airspeed gauge was and how to read it, convert kph to knots, and pay attention to what was happening on the radios, all while Russian chatter was internally being blasted through the "high-quality" Russian headsets. Eventually the radio chatter died down. I discovered it was because the radio quit working. By then we had wandered northbound from Panama City. I tried to dial in the Crestview VOR frequency for at least a little situational awareness, but unbeknownst to me, maybe because of all the unceasing Russian chatter, and the sweat and cigarette smoke in my eyes, I did not realize that our Moldovan FE kept changing the frequency back to the Panama City VOR on orders from the Navigator. Trying to center the needle towards the Crestview VOR and watching it suddenly swing to the seven o'clock position on the FE's command was driving me nuts as I was trying to remember the Russian words for North, South, East and West. I quickly needed to figure out what the heck was going on in the typical hot haze and reduced visibility before we ended up on a collision course beak-to-beak with an F-15. I finally gave up and resorted to simple Left and Right in Russian "Levo! Levo! E Pravo! Pravo!" After 45 minutes of this I was at my wits' end. Finally, Duke Field appeared off my left and all I had to do now was communicate to my instructor that we were finishing early. I was trying to convince the IP that the first radio was dead, which was why I had the Hurlburt Tower in two radios at once, while the nav was arguing for corridor clearance that I had already coordinated with the controllers for, when the FE lit up a fresh cigarette. It was seriously looking and sounding like Larry, Moe and Curly Go Flying!

In any case, I briefed the overhead pattern and received totally confusing responses from my civilian crew of

instructors. This, despite the fact that we had drawn it out and briefed it all before the flight. I joined a right downwind to Runway 36 and called it a day.

Fortunately, things improved rapidly. Instructor and crew began to understand each other, each of us who had qualified in the aircraft got recurrent, proficient, and eventually the instructors crew went home and left us to our own devices. We certified the Antonov for personnel and Container Delivery System (CDS) airdrop tactics and procedures at the Airborne Test & Eval Center at Fort Bragg, NC. We took the airplane on Special Tactics Squadron deployments, dropped loads all over the ranges, developed low-level tactics, experimented with NVG flight and built an American Aviation Advisor team that could integrate new NATO nations flying Antonovs and Mil helicopters into NATO exercises.

Spring forward 18 months, as I stood on the Kabul, Afghanistan ramp for the third night in a row awaiting the arrival of Hamid Karzai on his own Mi-17 which kept canceling because of maintenance issues. I thought to myself, given the opportunity, our trained Advisors could have returned him in a Northern Alliance aircraft rather than an MH-53M Pave Low. I like to think perhaps this might have set a different tone in the early days of the Afghan campaign had our capabilities been more appreciated and understood by planners at HQ AFSOC.



**The 6th's An-2, an excellent STOL aircraft, enters the range with STS aboard.** (Photo courtesy of author)

As time went on, we acquired an An-2, another Mi-17, the An-26, two UH-1Hs, and had maintenance and aircrews trained in the Twin Otter, Super Puma, Casa 212, C-130, Basler BT-67, and the Chinese Y-12. Four years later, when it took me a week to complete my "fini flight" as the squadron commander—flying a different pair of aircraft each day—I knew I had indeed found the aviator's paradise.



*About the Author: Lt Col Eric Huppert retired as the 6SOS commander in 2003 when the Air Force could not find him another cockpit. In retirement he continues to fly and instruct in aircraft as diverse as the OV-10 Bronco, the PC-6 and 7, his aerobatic Super Decathlon and Rockwell Commander, and the Airbus A320, including almost 1000 hours in the P-51 Mustang. He owns and operates a flight school for the Russian Mi-17 helicopter, and can be found most days at an airport near you.*



# 6th SOS and the SRI LANKAN Air Force Survival Program

*By Lawrence “Marty” Richards, CMSgt, USAF (Ret)*

In 1998, the 6th Special Operations Squadron (6 SOS) received a request from Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) to establish contact with the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) through US Embassy Colombo, Sri Lanka. The intent was to determine if the 6 SOS could train and advise the SLAF in the essential aerospace mission areas of fixed/rotary wing airlift, aviation maintenance, air base defense, special tactics, and survival and recovery. So began a multi-year strategic engagement between the 6 SOS and the SLAF focused on building relevant and sustainable survival and recovery capability. To comprehend the complexity of our engagement with the SLAF, we'll focus on four key periods: the initial meeting with SLAF leaders, final planning, initial training, and follow-on engagement.

## **Initial Meeting**

In 1998, the 6 SOS Director of Operations planned the initial trip and led a four-man team to Sri Lanka to establish contact with the SLAF and gain situational awareness regarding the area of operation. Our engagement with the SLAF began at very the height of decades of internal conflict, during a period between peace negotiations. At our first meeting with SLAF senior leaders we learned how severely the war between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) was impacting Sri Lanka's people, infrastructure, and military. The LTTE was an established Foreign Terrorist Organization and remained continuously violent, engaging in terrorist acts against the government and civilians, through the use of suicide bombers, bombings and hijackings (US

Author's elevated shelter 2002. (Photo courtesy of Marty Richards)





Department of State “Patterns of Global Terrorism: 2000”). We learned that the SLAF was losing both fixed wing and rotary aircraft during combat operations against the LTTE. What was most astonishing was a zero percent survivability rate when aircraft were lost over water. Through this initial contact we identified a compelling need to operationalize SLAF’s survival and recovery training and focus it on three main areas: water survival, jungle survival, and recovery operations. The desired end state was a cadre of SLAF instructors providing viable aircrew and operator training to survive and return from combat engagements. Our training concept called for full spectrum Combat Aviation Advisor operations integrating the capabilities of multiple aerospace disciplines. We knew this program would require several iterations of train the trainer activities.

### **Final Planning**

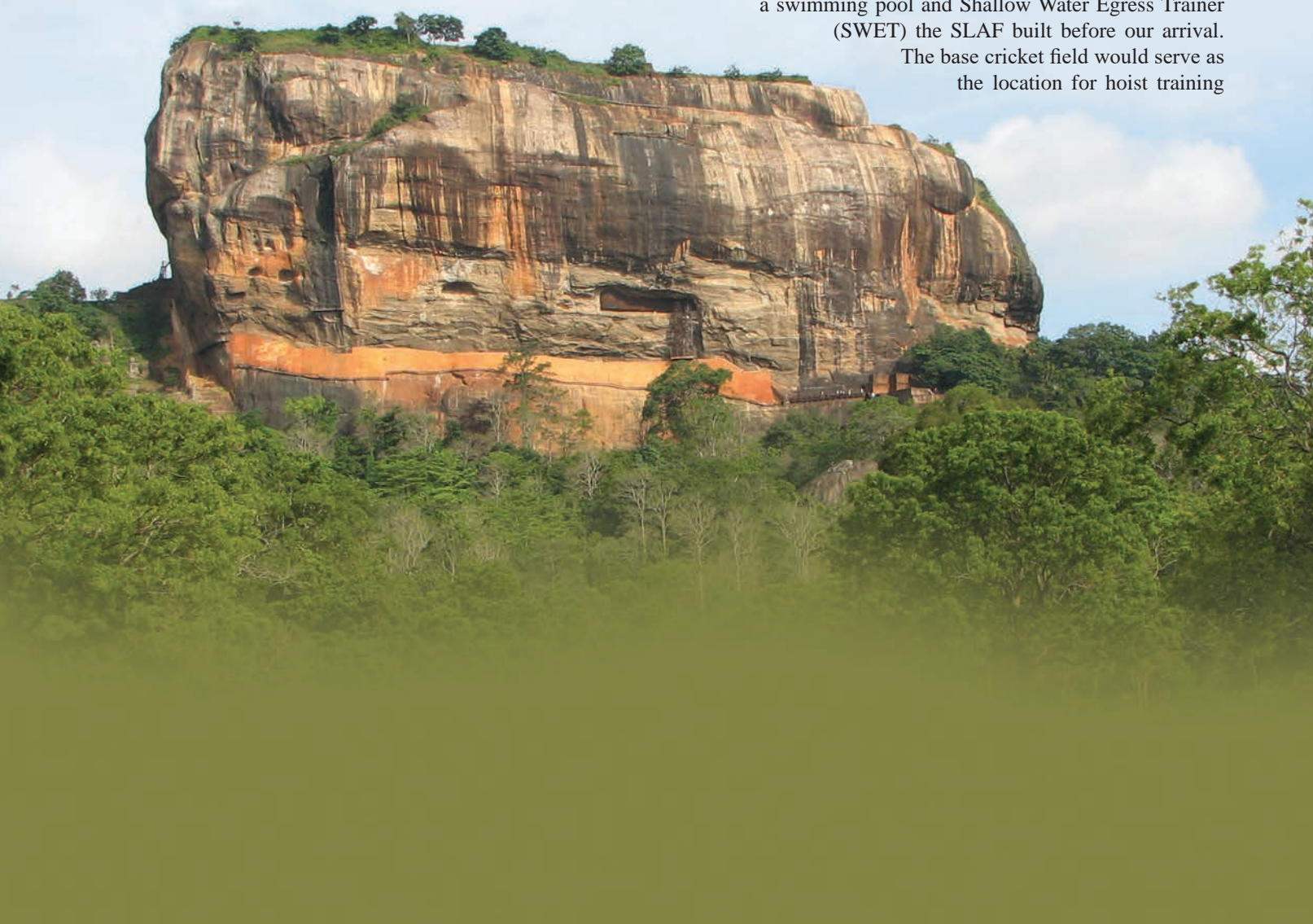
As we prepared to depart for the final planning conference in 1999, I thought about Mr. Klingaman’s (Mr. K) operating philosophy known as the “Coyote Rules.” This philosophy (see Mr. K’s article in this issue) afforded us experience-based

considerations for planning and executing advisory operations. The Coyote Rules reminded us to remain laser focused while conducting preparation for survival and recovery training in an environment torn apart by terrorism and conflict. Upon arrival in Sri Lanka, we immediately established contact with the SLAF senior leadership, briefed our training plan, and received a vector check. We found the SLAF leadership very eager to begin survival and recovery training—they were “all in!”

Our training plan consisted of three phases. First, prepare courseware enabling classroom academics, hands-on survival equipment orientation, water survival tactics including equipment employment, underwater egress training using a shallow water egress trainer (SWET), aircraft vectoring with survival radios, helicopter hoist operations, and an open water culmination exercise. Next, qualify a select group of SLAF core cadre to execute the training plan (train the trainer). And finally, oversee and monitor core cadre-led training of SLAF aircrew and operators.

To ensure our plan could be executed safely and without compromise, our team surveyed several training sites that were critical enablers of the training plan. This included the planned base of operations at Katunayake Air Base, complete with a swimming pool and Shallow Water Egress Trainer (SWET) the SLAF built before our arrival.

The base cricket field would serve as the location for hoist training





**Wirawila Training Area Sri Lanka** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**SLAF Improved SWET** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**Sri Lanka Naval Boats** (Photo courtesy of the author)

operations. And, because it is critical for CAA to train, advise, and assist using host nation equipment, we visited the SLAF aircraft survival equipment shop. This afforded our team much needed familiarity with equipment that would help us tailor core cadre training iterations and provide context for the development of relevant tactics. Finally, we surveyed Negombo Lagoon, the planned location for open water training. Our SLAF counterparts commonly referred to the Negombo waters as the “Crystal Blue Waters of the Lagoon”...something debated by the CAA team for years to come. It’s at Negombo that we met the Sri Lankan Navy members tasked to support open water training. Although their small fiberglass boats were not what we would typically consider Navy vessels, they later proved fine for training purposes. We did not meet the select group of SLAF core cadre until we returned for the mission. After arriving back at home station, the team executed final planning, team train-up, and rehearsals. As Mr. K would say, exhaustive planning and preparation was key to mission success as a team and unit.

### Initial Training

As our departure date neared in early 2000, our team became increasingly eager to deploy. We were getting tired of our self-induced training evolutions, mission preparations, and briefings. Suddenly we heard that the LTTE had attacked the Colombo International Airport. Katunayake Air Base, the planned hub of our operations, was on the other side of the runway. With preparations already in place, we awaited final mission approval. Everyone up and down the chain of command wanted mission briefs to inform a go or no go decision. Shortly after SOCPAC directed execution the team boarded a plane to Sri Lanka.

With boots on the ground, the team couldn’t waste any time if we were going to complete the agreed-upon SLAF training plan. So we immediately met with our training focal points, a pilot with combat recoveries under his belt and a flight doctor with survival knowledge and a good understanding of the Sri Lankan operating environment. Both turned out to be extraordinary pioneers. Their ideas, vision, and leadership benchmarked SLAF’s survival and recovery program at new heights. We were also introduced to seven crewmembers that rounded out the core cadre.

Core cadre training began with academic lessons focused on the open water environment, sustenance, underwater egress, and recovery operations. The cadre members spoke English and had no issues with teaching the courseware, which saved us time during the later training evolutions. Following the academic phase, the core cadre moved to the pool for underwater egress, equipment orientation, and water survival tactics training. Before starting the pool ops, we needed to establish a water confidence base line for the cadre. We introduced the cadre to a basic swim test consisting of a 50-meter swim, swimming underwater, treading water, and floating drills. We quickly realized that not all of the cadre could swim equally well, and some were not prepared for underwater egress training. The team adjusted the plan and integrated water confidence drills into the courseware for cadre members who lacked confidence or had weak water skills. This proved critical to successfully preparing the cadre to train the entire SLAF aircrew population. An important note: we didn’t lose anyone to a lack of water confidence moving forward.

With the core cadre ready for underwater egress training, we





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– Breanna Walters, daughter of Air Force Tech Sgt. Howard Walters who lost his life in 2003 while assigned to the 20th Special Operations Squadron.

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**Core Survival Cadre** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**Mi-17 Hoist Ops** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**Open Water Culmination Exercise** (Photo courtesy of the author)

transitioned to SWET training. At its essence, the trainer simulates the experience of being strapped into a submerged aircraft flipped upside down. Following impact, the trainee waits for all violent motion to stop, releases from aircraft restraints, and follows a reference point to exit the SWET. Each cadre member was required to successfully accomplish this task three times before moving on to hands-on equipment orientation. The classroom was the controlled pool environment, where we explained and demonstrated every piece of SLAF survival equipment found in their aircraft. Training included use of seat kits and raft kits, along with employment and repair of life rafts and associated equipment. This hands-on training later proved vital to successful completion of the culminating open water exercise.

With pool operations complete, we introduced the core cadre to the recovery phase of training. This consisted of aircraft vectoring and helicopter hoist operations. The cadre quickly grasped the necessity of accurate communications when vectoring aircraft to initiate a rescue attempt. With the aircraft overhead, the cadre learned to employ hoist tactics should the aircraft be unable to land. We followed a building block approach to aircraft hoist operations, beginning with ground training that reinforced safe equipment use and established a tactics base line. We proceeded to hoist operations from a 20-foot hover utilizing both the Mi-17 and Bell 212 aircraft, driving home the importance of trusting individual skills and survival equipment.

With the preparatory skills training complete, we transitioned to Negombo Bay for the open water culmination exercise. This exercise was the first time SLAF cadre members employed their rafts under open water conditions. The scenario placed each cadre member in a water survival situation following an aircraft crash. The cadre members used single-person and multi-person life rafts to practice newly developed life raft tactics and recovery techniques under stressful conditions.

Successful completion of the open water exercise marked the establishment of the first-ever SLAF water survival and recovery program led by its own core cadre. Over the next three weeks the team oversaw four cadre-led training iterations, helping to hone instructional skills and knowledge. A huge success, the SLAF leadership ensured 100% of assigned aircrew members attended the new water survival and recovery training course.

And learn they did. Several weeks after we returned to home station, SLAF counterparts informally contacted us with an update. A SLAF rotary-wing aircraft went down during combat operations. Three of the four crewmembers survived. These crewmembers contributed their success and lives to the combined training we accomplished together.

## Follow-on engagement

From 2001 to 2002, CAA continued engaging the SLAF, helping to expand its water survival and recovery course and solidify its jungle survival program. We introduced the Helicopter Emergency Egress Device (HEED), a compressed air device that provides life saving air during underwater egress. The SLAF successfully navigated their HEED procurement process prior to our final trip in 2002. We trained core cadre on how to implement safe, effective HEED training in conjunction with the water survival program. This helped the SLAF operationalize another



new capability, and completed CAA's evolution of water survival and recovery training.

CAA efforts also proved vital to the establishment of a viable SLAF jungle survival program. The program encompassed academics, jungle field training, and recovery operations. Academics and field training focused on the jungle environment's impact on personal protection (clothing/shelter and fire), sustenance (food/water), health, travel, and recovery. We led core cadre training at two phenomenal locations. In 2001 we worked in the south near Wirawila Air Base. This provided a sub-tropical application with outstanding resources; we easily accomplished all training requirements. In 2002 we trained in the north central Hingurakgoda and the Minneriya natural preserve areas. These locations afforded a superior jungle training evolution that focused on all aspects of jungle survival and recovery tactics. Our SLAF counterparts taught us a great deal about the jungle environment. It was definitely an amazing learning experience that helped broaden and develop my jungle operations tradecraft. We culminated jungle training with a full mission recovery profile centered on recovery of isolated personnel (IP). Combined SLAF and USAF Special Tactics personnel conducted a helicopter infiltration, rappelled onto the objective, and secured the perimeter with Mi-24 close air support...while pararescuemen treated the IP and prepared for helo extraction. The full mission profile was a huge success, demonstrating to the SLAF how multiple aerospace disciplines work together to recover and return an IP to friendly forces. The 2002 mission set confirmed the clarity of our vision and the effectiveness of our strategy. Working shoulder to shoulder with our SLAF core cadre, we built a sustainable SLAF water survival, jungle survival and recovery program.

Although this article is principally focused on survival and recovery training and its impact on the SLAF, we couldn't have done it alone. I personally want to thank my fellow Combat Aviation Advisors from across all aviation specialties for their unwavering support and contributions to this mission. It truly was a team effort that made this mission successful for the SLAF and our CAA team. Our efforts at the tactical level drove vision and strategy for the SLAF, helped deliver sustainable capability, and most importantly, had an enormous strategic impact on Sri Lanka's transition to a stable, free country today.

This period of my life as a young non-commissioned officer, operating around the world autonomously with my team, was without a doubt the most influential, impactful, and life-changing period of my career. The 6 SOS taught me the true meaning of the first SOF Truth, that humans are more important than hardware. It was the human spirit, the people around me and the impact we had on countless people from around the globe, that made me realize it's not about me or the hardware, but about the people, period.



*About the Author: CMSgt (Ret) Lawrence "Marty" Richards is a former Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Specialist and Combat Aviation Advisor, with 26 years of service. He has served in multiple leadership positions in both Air Force Special Operations Command and Air Education and Training Command. He led and executed advisor operations across the COCOMs with eight different partner nations.*



**STS Infil during Full Mission Recovery Profile** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**IP Extraction during Full Mission Recovery Profile** (Photo courtesy of the author)



**2001 Recovery Operations** (Photo courtesy of the author)

# AN ADVISORS STORY

*By Christopher "Jake" Jacobs, Maj, USAF (Ret)*

"So what do YOU want to do?" asked then 353rd Special Operations Group (SOG) Commander, Col Tom Beres.

I answered, "Sir, my first choice is the 6th SOS. That's what I really want to do."

"I'll contact the commander tonight," was his response.

That conversation was a pivotal point for me, both professionally and personally. It set the stage for what would shape the remainder of my career in the Air Force. What was intended to be a four-year controlled tour became a twelve-year journey into Eastern and Southeastern Asia as a combat aviation advisor (CAA). I wouldn't trade those twelve years for anything....

By the time the squadron took me for a "test drive" as an augmentee during its first Pacific Command (PACOM) foray to Korea in March 1996, it had done well to establish itself in the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) with a number of missions. Having expanded somewhat into the Central Command (CENTCOM), the squadron was now branching out into PACOM. I was hired with the intent of bringing Pacific theater experience on board. For the previous two and a half years, I had been the 353 SOG primary instructor for exchange training and subject matter expert exchanges with air forces from Thailand, Malaysia, India, and the Philippines. (Note: As I write this, I am literally about two kilometers away from the airfield where I flew with the Royal Thai Air Force throughout February and March of 1995.)

It was also during that time the squadron experienced its first mishap since standing back up. In Korea for that initial assessment, Lt Col Whitson immediately returned to Hurlburt to deal with the accident that claimed the life of

Capt Mark Todd. That fall the squadron would experience another mishap in South America. These accidents underscored the seriousness of the advisory business and that there were underlying variables flying with partner countries in non-standard aircraft that were pretty much unknown to most in Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) at that time. The lessons learned were utilized to create the operating instructions that would guide advisory operations in AFSOC into the future.

I mention these early challenges to the squadron because it shaped the mentality of this small organization. I recall Mr. Klingaman saying, "It's only going to take one more (incident) and they're going to send the moving vans and slam the locks on the door." We were treated differently in the AFSOC community and we knew it. More than a generation had passed since AFSOC had employed advisors in any capacity. Many of us felt like we were the proverbial square peg trying to fit into a round hole that was much more comfortable with Gunships, Talons, Pave Lows, and Shadows than it was a small group of guys flying on other countries' platforms. As such, our Concept of Operations (CONOPs) packages were staffed up the chain of command to the HQ AFSOC Director of Operations (DO) for approval. I saw this as a positive, though, as each package had numerous stops along the staffing process, which was an opportunity to inform and educate.

But it wasn't just within our own AFSOC community. Indeed, as we stood up PACOM operations, I knew that one of the initial challenges would be to establish the PACOM flight's credibility among our partner nations, as well as other IS Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the theater. It was to

be a deliberate process of engaging the right partners alongside the established component forces in theater.

With each successive year and each commander, we built upon successes. Over the next few years, our regulations were formalized and expanded. Our unit manning grew. Our first unit aircraft, two UH-1N helicopters came on board. Teams ventured into the European Command (EUCOM) and Africa Command (AFRICOM). The squadron started engaging Central Asia in Uzbekistan. I recall our PACOM team deployed about once per quarter during that time – honing our skills and training to our Mission Essential Task List (METL) skills. Equally important, we had established ourselves as a capable force to conduct foreign internal defense and gained a positive reputation among other SOF that operated in the Pacific. AFSOC began to highlight our capability and the 6th SOS was receiving positive attention in the Pentagon. The credibility was there – we were making a positive impact.

## **September 11, 2001**

Certainly to a person, we all remember where we were that day as the tragedies unfolded. I was seated for the weekly HQ AFSOC/DO meeting as the CAA representative. As the morning events unfolded, I turned my thoughts to what our response would be. While it soon became very apparent that traditional AFSOC weapon systems would be called into action, the role of the combat aviation advisor was not as clear. The CAA role would be much more situationally dependent and would look different from theater to theater.

In the Pacific, CAA operations would be shaped by a meeting that took place on November 20, 2001 between President George H. W. Bush and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal



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Arroyo. Calling it an extension of the war on terror in Afghanistan, President Bush pledged greater assistance to bolster the Philippines' ability to combat the Abu Sayyaf group which had ties to al Qaeda. In addition to a "robust training package" and the \$19 million already promised in foreign military financing, Bush said he would earmark \$10 million in Defense Department goods and services for the Philippine military and \$10 million for counterterrorism initiatives and law enforcement. Part of that package would include refurbished UH-1H helicopters. A number of 6th SOS planners provided inputs for what the package should include to build the capability for Night Vision Goggle (NVG) multi-ship operations.

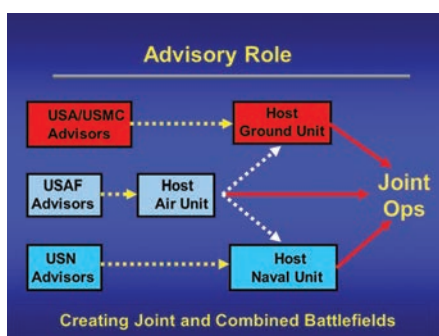
Squadron Commander, Lt Col Eric Huppert led the 6th SOS team members on the ground for the first several weeks of the squadron's participation in Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P) with Joint Task Force 510 under the command of then Brig Gen Donald Wurster in 2002. The first task would be the tactical-level assessment of the Philippine UH-1 aircraft. Our findings showed that the Philippine Air Force (PAF) UH-1 crews were okay with day, visual, air-land



**Maintenance training on the Chadwick 8500 balancer/analyzer.** (Photo courtesy of author)

operations, but there was no instrument or night capability – and certainly no NVG capability. With that assessment completed, I came in to replace Lt Col Huppert however, there was not much we could do to improve capacity as the waiting game of security assistance ensued. Forces were ready to build

capacity, but the bureaucratic system of foreign assistance built around a Cold War construct was going to take some time to catch up. During this time, we continued to build relationships with the PAF crews in Zamboanga. We provided some maintenance training as well as water survival training. US Special Forces Advisors in Zamboanga needed air support for runs to Basilan and for air reconnaissance. I would assist in routing those through what was then Philippine SOUTHCOM headquarters and coordinate with the PAF crews to communicate mission requirements. I recall filling over 40 such air support requests in about a month's time.



**Mr. Klingaman's slide depicting joint advisory operations.** (Slide courtesy of author)

It was during this time, I was approached by both US Army and US Navy SOF advisors. There were two separate targets that they were examining. We sat around a table discussing available assets and the capabilities of our partners to execute the respective missions in daytime of course. It occurred to me, "I am living 'the slide.'" For years in the 6th SOS briefing, Mr. Klingaman had created a slide that depicted the joint-combined battlefield with advisors. Alongside ground and maritime advisors, the 6th SOS brought air power into the equation. The missions against those targets never happened, but the integration of advisory elements in an operational environment marked significant progress.

In early 2003, we began to get more traction. Through an interagency effort, security assistance provided UH-1 helicopters and night vision goggles to enable the PAF to better support their

surface forces conducting operations against terrorist forces. At the time of equipment delivery, the PAF was still limited to day-only operations that severely constrained operations – the terrorists still owned the night. Fortunately, security assistance also brought in the 6th SOS to build this partner nation's capability to conduct night tactical operations on NVG's, including insertion/extraction for raids, rescues, and casualty evacuation. Concurrent with these efforts were security assistance programs aimed at creating a "light reaction battalion" of Philippine counter-terrorism forces that would be trained by US Army Special Forces.

Our first mobile training team (MTT) effort launched in February 2003 with the achievable goal of producing seven NVG qualified pilots and back-end "crew chiefs" (gunners/scanners) with single-ship remote landing capability, as well as seven qualified NVG maintenance personnel. We were challenged by weather, real-world threats, maintenance issues, and more. Having PAF pilots take direction from their back-enders marked a big shift in crew coordination for them, but our advisor instructors found innovative ways to foster new trust. By mid-April, we completed the task.

Subsequent deployments and MTTs built upon the foundation set in early 2003. Along with our PAF counterparts, we helped establish an NVG-gunnery range near the village of Biasong. It required building relationships with the local populace. Throughout several deployments, 6th SOS members donated much needed supplies to the local school – delivered by PAF crews in PAF helicopters. On another deployment, the squadron conducted a Medical Civic Actions Program (MEDCAP) in Biasong. Subsequently, 19 combat aviation advisors were awarded the Philippine Civic Action medal for their efforts. Winning the hearts and minds of the people was critical to continuing to operate night gunnery operations in the adjacent valley.

Lessons learned on the battlefield were integrated into successive training iterations. 6th SOS medical personnel



and security forces worked diligently to train PAF personnel to become tactical flight medics and others with quick reaction force capability. This would be the missing piece to a Casualty



**Biasong Elementary School, 2004.** (Photo courtesy of author)

Evacuation (CASEVAC) capability that was desperately needed. As Philippine pararescuemen were dedicated to PAF rescue forces elsewhere, this new medical capability had to be carved out using existing personnel from a variety of specialties including security, cooks, and transportation personnel. Yet through the adversity and dedication of the Philippine students, the capability grew.



**Night CASEVAC Training.** (Photo courtesy of author)

By mid-2004 there had been significant improvement in both the aircrews as well as the medics. It was now time to integrate. Philippine ground forces were introduced into the training with their US Special Forces advisors alongside of them in 2004. Scenario-based training was expanded to include the insertion of Philippine light reaction company forces, the rescue of hostages, the subsequent insertion of a PAF casualty evacuation team, the extraction

of all parties, and in-flight medical care of the simulated wounded as they were lifted to safety. We conducted a day iteration as a practice and then a night iteration utilizing an abandoned building in a "reclamation area" that was to be developed later near Cebu. This full-mission profile in October 2004, was to prove to be a game changer.

Conducting foreign internal defense and building new capabilities and capacity within a partner nation force takes time and effort. The measures of effectiveness are not always straightforward. Unlike conventional operations, you cannot use sortie counts or rounds on target to gauge success. As the program continued, we were constantly required to provide an



**PAF medical personnel practice rigging litters.** (Photo courtesy of author)

assessment of how effective we were. The results were largely more qualitative than quantitative. But I knew we were making a difference.

In mid-2005, I was chosen to lead the first PAF "Liaison-Coordination Element" team (PAF-LCE). While US Army Special Forces had numerous teams attached to different units and locations, our team consisted of an intelligence officer, a combat controller, and me. We had to cover the entire country. Later, we were augmented with some fixed wing attack personnel that were required for the mission. The job of the LCE was to provide "direct support not involving combat." We traveled the country conducted advisory ops where the mission dictated.

On one occasion around July 2005, while on the LCE, I was in Zamboanga at the helicopter squadron. It was on

this day "Oliver," one of the tactical flight medics (TFM) on a PAF casualty evacuation team approached me as I was walking to the squadron and told his story. Earlier that year, ground forces were battling Abu Sayyaf terrorists on



**Philippine joint armed forces conduct daytime full-mission profile.** (Photo courtesy of author)

the island of Jolo at night and there were several injured personnel. The PAF UH-1 aircraft, aircrews, and tactical flight medics that were on alert launched and, using NVGs, reached the scene. Once there, the TFM's collected the wounded, loaded them onto the helicopters and began administering emergency care. To Oliver's surprise, one of the wounded was one of the same light reaction company soldiers who had participated in the scenario-based training described earlier. In Oliver's words, "Major Jake, it was just like the training, so I knew exactly what to do and I saved his life!" Oliver had been one of the medics for our full mission profile in October of 2004 and his training paid off. That singular conversation validated my work and the work of so many other dedicated 6th SOS advisors over the previous 3 and



**Jeep loaned to PAF LCE, 2005.** (Photo courtesy of author)



**Medical training prepared PAF medics for challenges in combat.** (Photo courtesy of author)

half years.

Prior to this CASEVAC capability becoming resident in the PAF, Philippine ground forces believed that wounded in-action at night meant a long, life-threatening ride over land to reach a

medical treatment facility – if there was one in the area. According to one US Special Forces Officer and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) commander, because of this, there could be reluctance by ground forces to strike at night. After the training – and publicized casualty evacuations – a new confidence emerged. The terrorists no longer owned the night.

Over the next several years, our combat aviation advisors continued to train PAF crews, medics, and quick reaction personnel. There were numerous mission commanders, team sergeants, and teams that worked to build upon previous successes. The mission also expanded into fixed wing platforms including C-130s and OV-10s. The PAF LCE continued advisory operations throughout the Philippines. On my final deployment we continued working with the crews and ground personnel we had trained. As my time as an advisor came to a close, I had a sense of satisfaction. Our 6th SOS team had made a real difference. We were one

element of much bigger effort.

The story of the 6th SOS in the Philippines is an example of how SOF advisors, as part of a larger FID program, contributed to a nation's internal defense and development program. It illustrates the far-reaching impact of airpower enablement and the saliency of building partner capability and capacity to provide security and stability for our friends and allies. We were truly, "Tactical actors on the strategic stage." In 1999, then 6th SOS Commander, Lt Col Norm Brozenick challenged his 6th SOS advisors to be "Always capable, credible, and faithful." Indeed, throughout our extended efforts in the Philippines, we were just that, and I am grateful to have been a part of them.



*About the Author: Maj Christopher "Jake" Jacobs (Hobo 74) was assigned or attached to the 6th SOS for 12 years. In 2005, he was recognized for "Invaluable Service" by the Chief of Staff of the Philippine Air Force. He retired from active duty in 2008.*

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# Today's Combat Aviation Advisors

6SOS

*By Lt Col Bryan Raridon, Commander, 6 SOS*

Change and challenge have been among the few constants for the 6 SOS since it began conducting Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) operations in 1994. However, the past 5 years have marked a particularly turbulent and yet productive period for the CAA community. Since 2012, the CAA enterprise has relinquished rotary-wing operations, become a Total Force Integration (TFI) enterprise with the Air Force Reserve's 919 SOW, and moved from Hurlburt to Duke Field. Additionally, we have seen the addition and divestiture of the Nonstandard Aviation (NSAv) mission, a subsequent re-establishing of traditional CAA mission sets, and now are in the midst of incredible mission and unit growth. In standard Air Commando fashion, active duty and reserve CAAs have responded to those changes with flexibility and determination. More importantly, we have not wasted an opportunity to build and expand upon the foundation of those who have won so many quiet victories before us. While the bulk of this edition of the Air Commando Journal is dedicated to telling a few of those stories, I would like to take the opportunity to answer some of the questions that we commonly find ourselves answering for those outside of the community.

## **What are the specific roles of a Combat Aviation Advisor?**

Combat Aviation Advisors (CAAs) are Air Commandos responsible for the conduct of special operations activities by, with, and through foreign aviation forces.

Like all Air Commandos, CAAs execute special operations aviation tasks, but CAAs differ in that we specialize in executing those tasks "by, with, and through foreign aviation forces."

Dependent upon the specific tasking, the CAA's role is to assess, advise, train, assist, accompany and integrate those foreign aviation forces into joint and combined operations. In order to fulfill these roles, CAAs must possess the right combination of qualifications (demonstrated mastery of their skillset) and suitability (ability to thrive in the

elements required to affect the generation and integration of a foreign SOF aviation capability. Specific capabilities include Special Operations Air Mobility; Tactical Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); Armed Reconnaissance; and Agile Combat Support functions. Accomplishing and integrating these core tasks requires both



**Training in maintenance and flying of aircraft in foreign aviation forces worldwide is part of the mission of the 6th Special Operations Squadron.** (Photo courtesy of AFSOC)

CAA's environment). CAA assessment, training, and qualification is focused upon the identification and development of those skills and attributes in accordance with joint, service, and Major Command directives.

## **How are CAAs Employed?**

CAAs are employed as an Operational Aviation Detachment, or "OAD." An OAD is a mission-tailored team of CAAs containing all of the

surface and airborne specialties to be resident within the OAD. Operational units contain 14 Air Force Specialty Codes including maintenance, survival specialist, force protection, intelligence, officer and enlisted aircrew, aircrew flight equipment and a growing need for Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC). CAA medical capability is consolidated outside of the operational units, but remains an indispensable engagement tool, and CAA qualified medical

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personnel do incredible work within OADs and as part of independent medical engagements. In those instances where an OAD requires capabilities that are not resident in the unit, augmentation is made available through AFSOC.

OADs are particularly suited to work under a joint SOF chain of command in conjunction with US surface special operations elements that are embedded within a partner nation's (PN) ground or maritime force. Under this arrangement Air Force CAAs, Army Special Forces, Naval Special Warfare, and Marine Special Operations can drive beyond mere training and skillset transfer to influence joint effects by, with, and through a joint indigenous force.

### How are CAAs Organized?

Since 2012, CAAs have operated and organized as a Total Force Integration (TFI) initiative under the Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center (AFSOAWC). Within AFSOAWC's Irregular Warfare Directorate (IWD), Air Force Reserve CAAs from the 711 SOS and active duty CAAs from the 6 SOS operate together at home and while deployed. Meanwhile, CAAs in AFSOAWC's Training and Education Directorate conduct all formalized training under the 19 SOS, 5 SOS, and 371 Special Operations Combat Training Squadron at Hurlburt and Duke Fields.

### How are CAAs Tasked?

Requirements for CAA operations are generated at the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) and are prioritized at US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Due to increased demand for CAA activities throughout the world, USSOCOM has recently published Manual 350-50, which establishes a methodology for prioritizing and coordinating CAA fixed-wing and US Army Special Operations Aviation Command (ARSOAC) rotary-wing advisory activities. Prioritized engagements are tasked to the AFSOAWC IWD through the AFSOC Operations Center.

### What is the Future of the CAA Enterprise?

The CAA enterprise is planning for exciting but deliberate expansion of capabilities and significant growth in numbers. The demand for CAAs will far outpace our ability to source requirements. Large-scale efforts at all echelons continue to focus on unmasking requirements, identifying and garnering resources, validating and refining our programs, and prioritizing engagements. It is hard and detailed work, but we are determined to complete the task. Despite the importance of those things, the heart of our operation and capability will always be people; our CAAs, our partnered foreign forces, our fellow Air Commandos, and the members of our sister USSOCOM components. You will read in this edition of ACJ that we have huge boots to fill, but you will also see that we refuse to ride coat tails. We will continue our part of the work to generate and integrate specialized airpower by, with, and through our partnered foreign force... any time, any place.





Members of a 6th SOS Operational Aviation Detachment pose in front of an Mi-8 helicopter in a deployed location. (Photo courtesy of AFSOC)



# CAA Mission Qualification Course

6SOS

*By Lt Col Robert “Opie” Horton, Commander 371 SOCTS*

Combat Aviation Advisors (CAAs) operate across a full spectrum of environments. They embody the Air Commando mantra of Anytime, Anyplace. Advisors find themselves in a variety of uncertain environments, many in austere locations. This drives the need to provide their own force protection, self-recovery and sustainment capabilities. These capabilities require specialized training; teaching integrated combat skills, advanced cultural education, combined with practical experience. The Combat Aviation Advisor Mission Qualification Course (MQC) aims to teach new advisors the requisite skills to conduct the Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) mission. The course begins by teaching integrated field skills; followed by advisor education and

concludes with advanced advisor craft skills. Additionally, each advisor receives in depth language training and career field specific training.

MQC is the core course to qualify a Combat Aviation Advisor. It lasts 10 weeks in duration. MQC contains six distinct phases: Air Commando Course, Insurgency and Foreign Internal defense, Intercultural Competencies for Special Forces, Basic Inter-team Ground skills, Unconventional Warfare, and culminates with an advising Field Training Exercise called RAVEN CLAW. After completing MQC, students continue to language training phase, lasting anywhere from 14 to 28 weeks (depending on the language). If needed, students will continue on to career field specific training.

## Integrated Field Skills

The Air Commando Course teaches integrated fields skills focused on the “shoot- move-communicate” principles required by special operators for uncertain environments. The course is comprised of advanced shooting, combat medicine, small unit tactics, tactical force protection and advanced driving. Each of these skills builds upon one another in an integrated manner. The goal is to make the advisors proficient shooters, and provide them the abilities to navigate the myriad situations where they may find themselves.



**CAA Rick Newton with Ecuadorian pilots during a deployment to Manta, Ecuador, 1992.**  
(Photo courtesy of Rick Newton)

## Advisor Education

After completing the Air Commando Course, advisors learn detailed knowledge on FID doctrine and cultural competencies. The course partners with USAFSOS to provide the two distinct educational courses. The Insurgency and Foreign Internal Defense course begins with an examination of insurgency and instability to frame the operational environment. Students gain a greater understanding of strategic and operational drivers, as well as the necessity for comprehensive, realistic assessments when planning and conducting FID missions. The Intercultural Competencies Course provides general knowledge and skills to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and

effectively act, in a culturally complex environment to achieve the desired effect without necessarily having prior exposure to a particular group, region or its language.

## Advanced Advisor Craft Skills


The last phases of MQC focus on advanced skills, and advisor craft—Basic Inter-team Ground Skills week, unconventional warfare tactics and the capstone exercise RAVEN CLAW that simulates AvFID operations. Basic Inter-Team Ground skills teach advanced land navigation techniques, mounted and

dismounted urban operations. The course also reinforces surveillance detection skills learned in the Air Commando Course, while expanding the training with more advanced techniques. Furthermore, students learn how to operate multiple communications systems in order to communicate within a team and higher headquarters. Also taught are the principles of tactical operations center management and basic troop leading skills. After ground skills phase, students learn and execute unconventional warfare tactics, techniques and procedures. Students learn low-visibility operations, and how to operate in sensitive environments. A multiday field exercise tests their unconventional warfare abilities.

The MQC culminates in a two week, immersive exercise known as RAVEN CLAW. Students develop a FID plan for a notional country, executing several simulated planning events and a deployment to a simulated partner nation. Exercise RAVEN CLAW uses role players to simulate “indigenous forces” creating a realistic environment for students. The deployment is a five-day field exercise, conducted at a closed site and in austere conditions. Students execute operational missions, while executing command and control of the deployed Operational Aviation Detachment – Alpha, and maintain full force protection measures. The exercise culminates with the simulated country situation deteriorating, and students needing to conduct a self-recovery plan, requiring the execution of a 17 kilometer combined vehicle-foot overland movement. Exercise RAVEN CLAW evaluates the students’ mental fortitude, physical skills and ability to navigate challenging situations.

The final module is the advanced driving course. Dynamics of defensive driving provides advanced skills required to drive and navigate through uncertain environments safely. The course also teaches advanced maneuvering, principles vehicle ramming techniques, driver down and bailout procedures to respond to ambush. The driving module culminates in an exercise employing tactical application of simulated munitions (aka marker rounds) and vehicle maneuvers.

## Summary

Combat Aviation Advisor training is a complex endeavor, teaching SOCOM recognized skill sets required for FID missions. The training is intense and unique. The training builds a competent and skilled operator specifically honed for the AvFID mission. In all, it takes about 12 months to create a combat mission ready AvFID advisor. AFSOAWC employs a dedicated and seasoned cadre of instructors from across many SOF backgrounds to training the next generation of advisors. While the path to become a fully mission ready Combat Aviation Advisor is long and challenging, the outcome is an immensely capable Air Commando, built from dedication, and instilled with SOF values. 



# Combat Aviation Advisors Pipeline

CAA Mission Qualification Course					
ACC (4 Weeks)	ICSOF (5 Days)	IFID (4 Days)	Basic Inter-team Grnd Skills (5 Days)	Unconventional Warfare (5 Days)	Ex RAVEN CLAW (11 Days)
Adv Wpns Driving TCCC TFP	Culture education	AvFID core competencies/ exercises	Land nav Comm Mounted ops	Interagency UW	Msn planning Advising FTX
			Prerequisites: 1. ACC	Prerequisites: 1. ACC 2. BIG Week 3. ICSOF	Prerequisites: 1. ACC 2. ICSOF 3. IFID 4. BIG Week 5. UW
CAA Pipeline					
CAAMQC 10 Weeks	Language (14-28 Weeks)		Job Qualification (Various)		
Field Craft, Advisor Ed, Advisor Craft	Taught by USAFSOS-DLI LREC		C-145 qual, Maintenance qual (A&P), ETC		


**T**he Advanced Shooting module raises confidence and handling abilities above those received in basic AF weapons qualification. Advanced training on M9/M11/M4, teaches advanced shooting techniques, concealed carry Tactical Techniques and Procedures (TTPs), and multiple threat engagement while moving.

Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) is the SOCOM standard for battlefield first aid. TCCC provides high stress, rapid first aid response skills. These skills enable members to respond immediately to a myriad of situations in order to stabilize injured individuals until professional help can arrive. The use of the high-tech, casualty simulators in the Tactical Operational Medical Simulator laboratory enhances the course.

Small unit tactics instructs students in individual and team tactical movement techniques, to include defensive fire and maneuver tactics. Students learn immediate action drills teaching them to react to chance contact with hostile and

non-hostile aggressors, respond to ambushes, and defend in place.

Tactical force protection teaches advanced force protection skills to better analyze the environments and identify threats. The skills range from urban area movement to active shooter, flight deck denial tactics. The course includes threat assessment, risk assessment, vehicle bomb search, route analysis, surveillance detection and attack recognition, escalation/de-escalation of force techniques.

The final module is the advanced driving course. Dynamics of defensive driving provides advanced skills required to drive and navigate through uncertain environments safely. The course also teaches advanced maneuvering, principles vehicle ramming techniques, driver down and bailout procedures to respond to ambush. The driving module culminates in an exercise employing tactical application of simulated munitions (aka marker rounds) and vehicle maneuvers. 



# Global Influence of Combat Aviation Advisors in 2015

*By Lt Col Michael Hreczkosij, 6th SOS/DO*

On a bright summer day, the royal party eagerly awaited the arrival of the Kingdom's newest aircraft. The Ministry of Defense and Special Operations Command had purchased two specially modified gunship aircraft, and this was to be the inaugural call-for-fire demonstration. The aircraft began its slow loping run toward a simulated target. On the ground, a partner nation scout, specially trained by Marine Special

Forces, vectored the aircraft toward the notional enemy. Suddenly, the target erupted in a blast of fire. The innovative gunship had unleashed fury to great effect. The King rose and applauded in patriotic pride. Aboard the aircraft, an AFSOC Combat Aviation Advisor congratulated the partner nation aircrew on a successful mission. There was no wonder at everyone's excitement, seeing as just six months prior the





# Tactical Actors Strategic Effects

6SOS

aircraft were grounded, ineffective, and irrelevant. With the gunship operational, the Kingdom was now a credible balancer of regional security.

In 2015, Air Force Special Operations Command fully re-committed to the Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) mission. The 6th Special Operations Squadron, along with our reserve partners in the 711th Special Operations Squadron, has been

incredibly busy and effective around the globe. In every single AOR, our CAAs have been advising, training, and assisting partner aviation forces across a broad mix of mission sets. We've made the CAA transition without missing a beat, and our ops tempo is one of the busiest in all of SOCOM. In this article, I will discuss the major missions that CAAs have executed in the last 12 months. Due to classification reasons,

some specifics have been omitted, while still reflecting the fundamental nature of our operations.

In CENTCOM, CAAs were engaged in two persistent advisory missions, with teams deployed continuously throughout the year. At our first location, we maintained a force equivalent to two Operational Aviation Detachments (OADs), supporting SOCOM's #1 air advising mission. This mission has marked its second year of execution, and CAAs have been absolutely transformative. We have taken a nascent air force of copilots and junior sensor operators, and created a professional, agile, and effective ISR unit that is currently engaged in unilateral combat operations. Impressively, our partners engaged seamlessly in multi-role ISR operations, coordinating with their indigenous ground and rotary wing forces. In 2015, CAAs and partner nation crews flew thousands of combat hours.




**6th Special Operations Squadron members are shown in the Sahara desert with their counterparts from the Chad Air Force and tribal security forces.** (Photo courtesy of AFSOC)

Our second CENTCOM mission was a recently emerging partner due to ongoing combat operations. The SOCOM Commander identified a critical requirement for a strike type aircraft with a strong partner nation, and AFSOC was able to deploy a small team of CAAs within 30 days. When they arrived, the program was non-functional. The aircraft were grounded, the weapons had never been fired by the partner nation, and both their leadership and our US Embassy were unsure that this unit would ever be combat effective. Within the past year, this small CAA footprint has created remarkable results. With a team half the size of a typical OAD, CAAs resolved all of the outstanding maintenance issues, got the aircraft in the air, and most importantly, began training on the fundamentals of air-ground integration. Recognizing that the

critical element for success was the ability of our partner nation to work jointly, the CAAs worked shoulder to shoulder with our Army and Marine SOF partners. By the end of the year, the unit was able to execute call-for-fire using multiple munitions types, across a dynamic set of targets, communicating with standardized professional terminology. Over the next several years we will continue to work with this partner as they look to fully develop a truly indigenous and self-supporting find-fix-finish SOF capability.

In 2015 AFSOC also supported multiple initiatives managed by the Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs section. Our CAAs executed six Mobile Training Team (MTT) missions funded by various Security Assistance programs. These Congressionally supervised cases involved furnishing multi-role Cessna 208EX "Caravan" aircraft to numerous partners across the AFRICOM theater. AFSOC CAAs trained partner air forces on CASEVAC, special air mobility, fundamentals of ISR, intel fusion, and SOF air command and control. Throughout the year CAAs fanned out across the continent, training with partners in such countries as Mauritania, Niger, Uganda, and Kenya. These MTTs typically lasted between 4 to 6 weeks, and bolstered our allies in their efforts to contain violent extremism within their sovereign borders. These Security Assistance missions, while brief in duration, provided critical strategic effects. For example, in Niger, during the graduation party the Nigerian Air Force Chief immediately tasked his nation's first-ever real world ISR mission. In Uganda, the unit trained by CAAs was promptly identified as the primary medical evacuation squadron for the UN in Somalia and East Africa

AFSOC also executed four advisory Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events during 2015. AFSAWC uses JCETs to both hone our skills as CAA - as well as provide Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) with the capability to engage with critical partners on a limited basis. Our CAAs worked with our long-time partners in the Honduran Air Force on counter-terrorism efforts, operating the Maule light aircraft. We also exercised with our allies in the Royal Thai Air Force, training and advising on the PC-6 Porter on special air mobility and ISR. In Peru, we executed a JCET focusing on the RC-26 ISR aircraft, which specializes in counter-narcoterrorism. Finally, in Poland, CAAs trained with our partners on the M-28 light STOL aircraft, focusing on NVG airland, LCLA airdrop, and austere field operating procedures. The Poland JCET was especially significant, as it was the first CAA event that was primarily executed with 711th SOS Air Force Reserve Command advisors.

2015 was an incredibly busy and productive year for the CAA enterprise. As we look forward to 2016, the demand for air advisors is nearly insatiable across the TSOCs. We are looking forward to executing a similar mix of persistent operations, MTTs, and JCETs as SOCOM's premier aviation advisor force. 



# Observations from the Field:



## CAA Operations Afghan Special Mission Wing

6505

*By Lt Col Bryan Raridon, AFSOC/A3V*

Since 2012, the Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) community has undergone sweeping change. This, coupled with an ever-changing set of security challenges, has required the CAA community to assess itself, validate time-tested concepts, and test assumptions against current and emerging requirements. Recent combat operations alongside Afghanistan's Special Mission Wing (SMW) have provided one of many testing grounds for CAAs. While the lessons continue to pour in, the SMW experience continues to bring to light factors that are favorable to CAAs' ability to generate combat effects and influence foreign forces unto measurable end states.

Organized in 2005, what is now known as the Special Mission Wing (SMW) is Afghanistan's only unit capable of rotary-wing infiltration/exfiltration of Afghan SOF under night, low illumination conditions. It is widely considered the most capable unit of its kind throughout the entirety of Central Asia. The SMW's forward-thinking leadership and Mi-17 aircrews' mixture of skill, bravery, and consistent performance in NVG air assault operations are unquestioned among Afghan and US SOF. However, the draw-down of coalition forces in 2014 caused a multifold increase of risk to SMW and Afghan Commando operations due to the waning availability of coalition tactical air support. To help fill this gap, USSOCOM directed CAAs to join US Army rotary-wing Advisors and contract personnel at the SMW in February of 2014. The CAAs' short-term task was to accept delivery of a number of modified PC-12 aircraft, to qualify contractor-trained Afghan pilots and sensor operators, and to develop and integrate tactical ISR capability within the SMW to directly support SMW air assaults and Afghan Commando assault forces for the 2014 fighting season and beyond.

The SMW immediately proved fertile ground for CAAs. In February 2014, the initial team of four CAAs Arrived in Kabul to take a handoff from two USAF Air Advisors and immediately began developing tactics, completed work on checklists, and began drafting operational guidance alongside

newly-minted Afghan aircrew. CAAs, needing to establish operational momentum and credibility, also immediately leaned hard into combat operations. CAAs conducted their first joint combat operation within one week of arrival to theater. Within three weeks, SMW PC-12 crews were credited with the success of multiple air assault missions. By the end of March 2014, the partnered PC-12 crews became affectionately known as "Big Brother in the sky" by their fellow SMW air assault crews and Afghan Commandos; a name that sticks to this day. In April 2014, an additional 7 CAAs and AFSOC augmentees were hard at work qualifying and training additional Afghan crews "on the job" during combat operations. Intensified fighting prior to the historic Afghan presidential election drove multiple large-scale operations, during which Afghan aircrew and their CAAs were decorated for combat effectiveness by both the Afghan and US governments. In short time, CAAs saw "green" Afghan crews grow in skill and confidence rooted in solid capability. By fighting season 2015, "Big Brother" became truly Afghan when the first SMW aircraft commanders took the helm from CAAs to provide Afghan-unilateral mission command, planning, and execution of Afghan joint SOF operations. Afghan-unilateral crews flew over 500 sorties supporting combat operations in the last half 2015. By fighting season 2016 SMW aircrews will not only be operating unilaterally, but training themselves. In January 2016, the core of the Afghan SMW PC-12 instructor cadre completed training and qualification, and CAAs began a deliberate transfer of training responsibility to Afghan instructors. This has all occurred during almost constant combat. Since 2014, CAAs have flown almost 1,900 combat sorties alongside Afghan crews totaling over 4,000 flight hours during which CAAs qualified over 20 pilots, 18 sensor operators, and 10 aircraft commanders, six of which have completed NVG qualification. In addition CAAs have completed system integration and operational test and evaluation on 17 new PC-12 aircraft. Along the way CAAs have earned the trust of Afghan and US joint SOF commanders, and have fostered strong working relationships with US SOF

partnered with Afghan Commandos. A number of notable factors contribute to gains to date at the Special Mission Wing.

The speed and depth of gains at the SMW would not be possible without the benefit of US joint command, planning, and execution. All coalition SOF Advisory operations in Afghanistan are organized and prioritized under the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan. This scenario places CAAs in a position to develop integrated plans, tactics, and training alongside Army Special Forces, US Army Ranger, British SOF, and interagency counterparts advising Afghan special mission units. Unity of command under a single SOF command with a joint advisory campaign allows CAAs to flourish as part of a joint SOF Advisory team that not only achieves joint effects on the battlefield, but that is able to influence the elimination of crippling institutional and operational “stove piping” through constant opportunity (and expectation) to integrate for and during all advisory efforts. Although able to operate unilaterally, the CAA experience at the SMW highlights that US SOF by/with/through activities benefit from joint command, planning, and execution to no lesser extent than unilateral SOF operations.

SMW operations additionally highlight that, to achieve desired end states, CAAs must be granted authorities that match the required level of involvement with the partnered force and that allow integration with surface SOF Advisors. Initially, authorities permitting direct combat participation with Afghan partners allowed CAAs to aggressively and immediately generate joint combat effects in support of Afghan SOF partnered with US ground SOF Advisors (with the same authorities). With the ability to mitigate risk to mission when training Afghan PC-12 crewmembers “on the job,” the tradeoff between training and the execution of combat operations was not a zero-sum game. Generating “quick victories” in support of user requirements secured staunch support from US and Afghan military and civilian leaders, proved the abilities of SMW Afghans, and legitimized CAA timelines and approaches toward Afghan-unilateral PC-12 operations. At the relational level, CAAs’ ability and willingness to fly and fight aggressively alongside Afghans lent immediate credibility to CAAs across Afghan Commandos, US SOF, and SMW aircrews. With this influence, CAAs deliberately moved above-and-beyond developing Afghan skillsets, and put added and consistent emphasis on developing combat leadership, decision-making,

and fostering an “assault mentality” in the PC-12 aircrews, all to great effect. Although many CAA engagements may not require authorities allowing direct participation in combat, it is critical that authorities enable CAAs to engage the partnered force at the appropriate level to reach the desired capability end state, and furthermore to integrate with US SOF Advisors to achieve joint SOF effects.

Affecting the production and sustainability of legitimate SOF air capability requires time and resources, or “persistence.” Persistence in the context of CAA operations is best defined as “the determination to remain engaged with a partnered force for the time and with the level of involvement required to achieve a desired end state.” Persistence should not be mistaken for “staying somewhere” or “stagnation.” Rather, it suggests a “continual moving toward” a desired end state. Persistence in its application at the SMW has secured the time and resources required to employ a multi-phased approach to build tactical skills, integrate new fixed-wing units, and to integrate holistic SMW fixed and rotary-wing capabilities with users across the Afghan National Security Forces. Persistence to a clearly-defined end state is also beneficial in that it allows CAAs to develop measurable milestones, and to conduct objective assessments while applying approaches that include subjective elements. Relationally, persistence at the SMW suggests US national will to complement and legitimize the efforts and motivation of the CAA teams directly engaged with SMW aircrews and Afghan Commandos. Persistence has not only led to objective measures in reaching an end state, but has demonstrated real commitment to our Afghan partners.

In every observation and lesson from the CAA experience at the SMW, the overwhelmingly-common thread is that every inch of ground gained is due to, and alongside, incredible people. Since their existence, CAAs have taken on many roles in various places around the world. With the help of other Air Commandos and a US Army CW5, CAAs partnered with the SMW have been advisors, teachers, friends, and examples. They’ve offered encouragement when pay and food were scarce, and calm through the nervousness of a first fight. Their hands have applied tourniquets and their rifles have provided covering fire. They’ve shared in the loss of American and Afghan friends without loss of a day’s work. In Air Commando fashion, they’ve closed with and directly engaged our enemies. In CAA fashion, they’ve done so alongside our friends.



**CAAs pause for a picture after repelling a complex assault on their position. Other CAAs partnered with Afghan PC-12 crews launched under direct fire to coordinate an Afghan counter-assault against insurgent forces. Afghans not pictured for their security.** (Photo courtesy of author)







# 711 SOS Combat Aviation Advisors



UH-1N Huey helicopter flies the pattern at Hurlburt Field. (USAF photo by CMSgt Gary Emery)

## Air Force Reserves Enter the AvFID Arena

*By Col Kurt Matthews, 919 SOG/CC*

Until 2008, the 919th Special Operations Wing's mission was flying the MC-130E Combat Talon I and the MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft at Duke Field, Florida, as part of the 919th Special Operations Group. With the retirement of the US Air Force Reserves flying the MC-130P, a new chapter began for our mission sets. As a result, in 2008, the 5th Special Operations Squadron moved to Hurlburt Field, Florida, and began a new

chapter with the mission of the Combat Aviation Advisor (CAA) program. With the guidance of Active Duty advisors, the 5 SOS developed a new program of instruction to train CAAs.

The 5 SOS sent the first five reservists through the CAA mission qualification course in 2011. As additional new mission sets evolved, the 5 SOS was identified to total force integrate (TFI) with the 19 SOS at Hurlburt Field. The 711th Special

Operations Squadron was preparing for the retirement of the MC-130E Combat Talon 1; thus, a new mission set for the 711th was on the horizon.

The 919th Special Operation Wing's premier flying squadron was the 711 SOS. The unit has the distinction as Air Force Reserve Command's (AFRC) most highly decorated flying organization. Few realize this Air Force Reserve organization has been quietly flying

and fighting at Duke Field for more than four decades. Today, the 711 SOS is total force integrated with AFSOC's 6th Special Operations Squadron. The unit is remissioning from specialized air mobility into its new mission, Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) as a fully operational CAA Squadron.

Since the core mission of AvFID was established over 20 years ago, the 6 SOS has led the way for AFSOC. Now they have a sister squadron, the 711 SOS. Recently, the 6 SOS has been going through a transition of its own. In the past 6 years, the 6 SOS had shed its role of instructing, advising and assisting in rotary-wing aviation to focus solely on fixed-wing aircraft. In 2012,

Command (TSOC) needs, and AF international affairs programs, the AFSOAWC approach to AvFID strikes a balance between strategic patience and concentration of effort. Through a combination of persistent and periodic engagements, today's AFSOC Combat Aviation Advisors focus their operations in three fixed-wing categories: light mobility, light ISR, and light strike. Organizationally, the AFSOAWC is partnered with the 919 SOW to leverage manpower and experience while functionally integrating under the "total force" construct. However, the Irregular Warfare directorate (IWD) of the AFSOAWC is the primary mission integrator which integrates the

CAA force. Building in this flexibility allows the units to tailor their expertise for mission requirements. The result of the association and growth is an almost tripled capacity than existed for AFSOC CAA in 2012, with the ability to help our partners build lasting and competent holistic flying programs. This is the organizational environment of today's AFSOC Combat Air Advisor units.

The 711 SOS is unique, not just that it has become part of the AvFID mission set during a transformational part of AFSOC's history, but that it is an Air Force Reserve squadron. While a reserve member may not deploy as often as their active duty counterpart, they often start with a higher level of experience. Most reservists in the 711 SOS have come to the squadron from active duty assignments and bring with them years of experience. In fact, one of AFRC's goals is to be the "catcher's mitt" for members who choose to leave active duty service, but desire to continue serving in the reserves. This helps "capture" experienced Air Commandos who may have otherwise left AFSOC from active duty into the civilian sector. Many 711 SOS members have served in the unit for 10-20 years. The depth of experience and continuity of its members are enormous force multipliers for the 711 SOS in its new mission of AvFID; building personal and professional tactical relationships with our foreign mission partners now that may also be leveraged strategically in the future.

The Combat Aviation Advisor mission has changed in just a very few short years. AFSOC and AFRC have built upon a long standing relationship to create the most successful total force integrated partnership in the Air Force between the AFSOAWC and the 919 SOW. The partnership is centered on the AFSOC core mission of Aviation Foreign Internal Defense. CAAs will continue to embody the SOF Truth: special operations forces cannot be mass produced and competent special operations forces cannot be created after emergencies occur. The 711th Special Operations Squadron has stood up and taken its place as an equal partner in the future of AFSOC Combat Aviation Advising. 🦅



**The Air Force Special Operations Command-owned C-145 Skytruck aircraft on the 919th Special Operations Wing flightline at Duke Field.** (USAF photo by TSgt Samuel King Jr.)

the association with the 6 SOS and 711 SOS was formalized between AFSOC and AFRC. In 2013, the 6 SOS was physically moved from Hurlburt to Duke Field where they share a facility with the 711 SOS.

AvFID continues to evolve. Under the leadership of Lt Gen Brad Heithold, Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command and Col David Tabor, Commander, Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center (AFSOAWC), AvFID has taken on a renewed focus. By prioritizing National Strategic objectives of building partnership capacity with our foreign allies, Theater Special Operations

organizations operationally. The IWD functions to provide strategic planning and operational training to create synergy between the AFSOAWC and the 919 SOW, culminating in mission execution with the 6 SOS and 711 SOS.

Integrated with the 6 SOS since 2013, the 711 SOS began training Combat Aviation Advisors and deploying CAAs as part of advisor teams the same year. Additionally, in 2014-2015, the 711 SOS aviators gained C-145 experience flying the Non-standard Aviation (NSAv) mission in SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM. By supporting NSAv operations, the 6 SOS was available to then commit CAAs to AvFID operations and grow the





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# Part One

During World War II the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) adopted the term “special operations” to identify the top secret missions it was flying in support of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), America’s first central intelligence and clandestine warfare agency (and the direct forerunner of the CIA). USAAF missions flown for the OSS included parachuting secret agents deep behind enemy lines, infiltrating teams of guerrilla warfare specialists into enemy-occupied territory, and air dropping thousands of tons of weapons, ammunition and explosives to Resistance groups. This two-part article provides a brief overview of the special operations flown by the USAAF during the war with an emphasis on the role played by the special units created by the air force specifically to fly OSS missions.



**A B-25 attacks a target in the Imphal Valley.** (Photo courtesy of AFSOC History Office)





# SECRET WINGS OF THE OSS

## Special Operations of the US Army Air Forces in World War II

*By Bernard V. Moore II, Col, USAF (Ret)*

Our story begins with the creation of the OSS by President Franklin Roosevelt in June 1942. The OSS had two operational functions which became significantly dependent on aviation support from the USAAF during the war. These were the intelligence collection activities of its Secret Intelligence (SI) branch and the clandestine guerrilla warfare and sabotage operations of its Special Operations (SO) branch.

Early in the war the OSS established close ties with its British counterpart agencies, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, aka MI6) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) (Britain's SOE was the original source of the term "special operations"). Close relations between the OSS and its British counterparts allowed the American agency to learn early about the connection between aviation and the basic requirement to secretly infiltrate agents into enemy-occupied territories, to resupply them, and sometimes to extract them. The preferred method of infiltration in most cases was by aircraft which would either drop the agents by parachute or the agents would be directly landed on the ground in remote locations.

In 1940, the British Royal Air Force (RAF) created the first air unit that was specifically trained and equipped to fly clandestine missions. Eventually the RAF created six squadrons

specifically to support SOE and SIS. It is fair to say that in their combat operations into enemy territory during 1940-1943 these RAF special units "wrote the book" on the specialized tactics, techniques, procedures and equipment required for successful clandestine air infiltration, resupply and exfiltration. Through its contacts with SOE and SIS, the OSS learned all about the essential role being played by the RAF special units in clandestine warfare and intelligence operations.

After Pearl Harbor, the American and British political and military leaders agreed on their grand strategy for the war. OSS leaders and planners were careful to ensure that their new agency directly supported this strategy and the various regional military campaigns that followed. The most important decision was to apply the highest priority to defeat Germany first and, only after the Nazis were destroyed, to shift the global effort against Japan. This meant that the overwhelming majority of American land and air forces would initially be committed to the war against Germany. With the exception of US naval forces, the war against the Japanese would be based on an "economy of force" strategy. The central focus of the Western Allies in the war against Nazi Germany was to be a massive, decisive land invasion of northwestern Europe, followed

by a land offensive straight into the heart of Germany itself. The Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that the main invasion of Continental Europe would be launched in the Normandy region of northwestern France (Operation OVERLORD) with a supporting invasion on the Mediterranean coast of southern France (Operation DRAGOON) intended to protect the southern flank of the main effort in the north. The Combined Chiefs agreed that the allied invasion in Normandy and the follow-on offensive across northern France toward Germany would be supported by all means available as the unchallenged top priority. OSS leaders understood it would be essential for the OSS to give these campaigns their maximum effort.

During 1942 and 1943 the OSS established major SO and SI bases overseas wherever the US military established its key theater headquarters so they could be tied in with the theater commanders and their regional campaigns. Major OSS bases, which employed USAAF special operations, were established in England, Algeria, Italy, India and China. (It should be noted that General Douglas MacArthur did not allow the OSS to set up operations in his Southwest Pacific Theater nor did Admiral Chester Nimitz allow the OSS to conduct operations in his Pacific Ocean Areas theater.)

As the overseas OSS units began to establish nascent SO and SI capabilities they began to submit requests for aviation support to their respective theater USAAF commanders.

The various OSS chiefs were eager to begin infiltrating their agents into enemy-occupied territory, and to begin providing aerial resupply to Resistance groups. Based on what they knew from RAF experience, the OSS chiefs realized that what they needed was not simply the occasional use of unarmed transports but rather the exclusive use of special units equipped with specially modified combat airplanes, preferably long-range high capacity bombers like the B-17 Flying Fortress or B-24 Liberator. Unfortunately, these were exactly the kinds of airplanes that USAAF commanders wanted to protect from what they saw as clearly ancillary roles.

In 1942 the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had established a policy which left it up to the overseas theater commanders to decide if they wanted to provide any of their allocation of existing, deployed USAAF forces to support the OSS and its clandestine operations. Throughout the first 18 months of the war, requests from the OSS commanders in the European and Mediterranean theaters to the USAAF for air support were invariably denied because air force commanders were extremely reluctant to divert their limited long range bombers from what they saw as the air force's top global priority, the daylight strategic bombing campaign against Germany. Indeed, theater air commanders did not begin to provide any support to the OSS until October 1943 and significant air support did not begin until January 1944. In the Mediterranean and European theaters USAAF assets were finally, but only grudgingly, provided to support the OSS because of increasing pressure from the senior theater commanders to their subordinate air commanders to provide the needed air support to enable the OSS (and SOE) to conduct clandestine warfare and intelligence activities in direct support of the forthcoming OVERLORD and DRAGOON campaigns.

The two OSS bases best positioned to directly support

Operations OVERLORD and DRAGOON were headquartered in London and Algiers respectively. OSS/London was assigned to conduct OSS operations throughout northern France while OSS/Algiers covered southern France. The main focus of the OSS efforts would be to provide intelligence on German forces, defenses and plans, and to strengthen and guide the fighting forces of the Resistance groups in order to slow German reinforcements to the invasion fronts and disrupt German forces in the rear areas. Throughout these areas the OSS would work in close cooperation with the British SOE and MI6. But, unlike the British agencies, the OSS bases in England and Algeria initially had no aviation capability they could rely on to infiltrate German-occupied territory. For air support, the OSS had been forced to rely on occasional support from the RAF, but this was very difficult to come by. This situation finally began to change in fall 1943 as the USAAF belatedly found ways to begin providing aviation support to the OSS.

## First Unit, First Missions

In August 1943 Lt Gen Carl "Tooeey" Spaatz, the senior American air commander in the North African Theater of Operations, directed the US Twelfth Air Force to set up a small aviation detachment for use by the OSS base in Algiers in its special operations into southern France. The unit was called the Special Flight Section of the Fifth Bombardment Wing (Heavy) and was the first special operations unit in the American air force. Spaatz allocated only three B-17F Flying Fortress long-range four-engine strategic bombers with three combat-veteran flight crews; it was a modest beginning, but at least it was a start. The Special Flight Section was initially organized at Massicault airdrome, Tunisia.

Over the following two months, the unit's B-17's were put through a program of modification to reconfigure them from the high-altitude daylight bombing role to the low-altitude nighttime special operations role. The Special Flight Section's B-17's received modifications based on advice provided by veteran RAF special operations flyers. First, all equipment needed for the high altitude bombing role was removed, including the oxygen equipment, the bombsight, and the machine guns in the nose, fuselage waist positions and the entire ball turret assembly mounted under the belly of the plane. The only machine guns that remained were the top turret and tail guns. The large, round hole where the ball turret had been became the exit through which parachutists would jump. The engine exhaust systems were covered by flame dampeners to hide their glow in the darkness. All undersurfaces of the fuselage, wings and stabilizers were painted in matt black night camouflage and the national insignias were toned down to be less visible at night.

While the planes were being modified, the flight crews were entered into a training program run by OSS/Algiers with instruction provided by the veteran crews of an RAF special operations unit located at Blida airfield, Algeria. Their new mission would be clandestine insertion of OSS Secret Intelligence agents and OSS Special Operations teams into southern France. The focus of training was on night low-

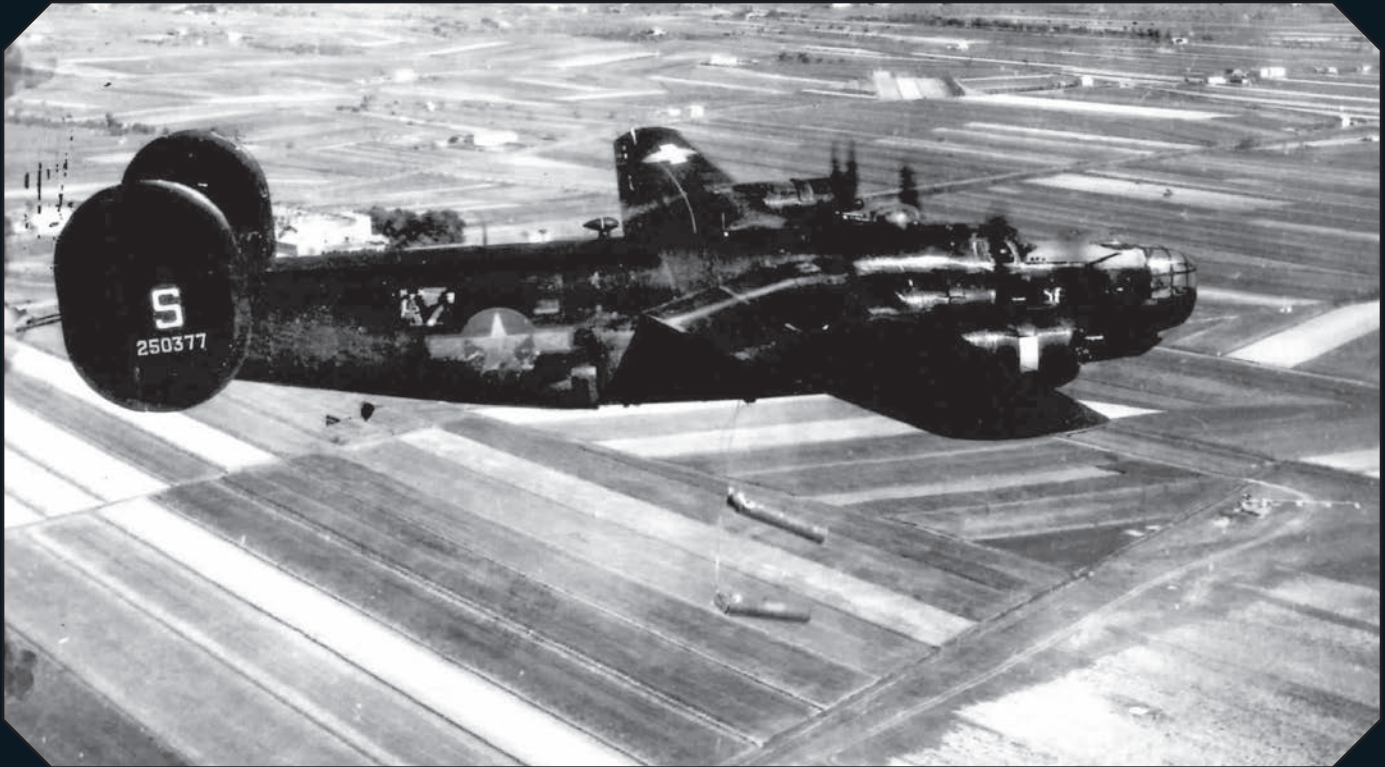




**B-17F with blacked-out undersides of 885th BS behind unit at award ceremony, Algeria, 1944.** (Photo courtesy of the Moore Collection)



**Bulges of flame-hiders cover engine exhausts on this black CARPETBAGGER B-24D.** (Photo courtesy of the Moore Collection)



**Containers drop from all-black, modified B-24H of 859th BS in Italy, 1945.**  
 (Photo courtesy of the Moore Collection)



**CARPETBAGGER B-24H with special modified navigator position in nose.**  
 (Photo courtesy of the Moore Collection)



altitude navigation and procedures for the airdrop by parachute of personnel and supplies. Practice missions were flown around Tunisia and Algeria and practice airdrops were conducted at an OSS training base near Algiers.

After a few weeks of ground training was completed the first modified B-17 was ready for test flights and practice missions. As one would expect, there was never enough time for an in-depth training program and there was considerable pressure to start combat operations. Finally, with the availability of sufficient moonlight and acceptable weather over France, the first USAAF special operations mission was launched after nightfall on 19 October 1943.

The crew that flew the initial mission by the Special Flight Section employed the tactics and procedures which were fairly typical for USAAF special operations missions that followed throughout the other campaigns in the war against the Germans. The objective of the first mission was to parachute a load of weapons, ammunition and other guerrilla warfare supplies to a group of French Resistance fighters who were being guided by a British SOE agent. The mission was launched from Blida airfield, Algeria which was the main RAF special operations base for missions into southern France and was close to the OSS and SOE bases in the city of Algiers. The target was an isolated drop zone located in the French Alps on the French border with Switzerland, near Lake Geneva. Drop time was after midnight. The distance from Blida direct to the target drop zone was approximately 671 nautical miles as the crow flies (the actual route would be longer since it would not be flown in a straight line).

The Special Flight Section flew the USAAF's first special operations mission on the night of 19/20 October 1943. The crew, led by pilot Capt Paul Callis, took off in their B-17F from Blida airfield, Algeria after nightfall and set course to the north over the Mediterranean Sea headed for France. With the airplane steadily cruising at 180 miles per hour, the navigator checked his position by crossing over the western edge of the Balearic Islands roughly halfway across the Mediterranean (ignoring the fact that the islands belonged to neutral Spain). For the flight over water, the table navigator used the dead reckoning navigation technique which calculated speed, wind drift and time flown to plot their progress. They soon penetrated the coast of France on the French Riviera, flying at about 6000 feet to stay above coastal flak barrages and carefully avoiding port cities. They were now over German-occupied territory. After safely passing the coast, the pilot descended to around 1000 feet above the undulating moonlit countryside. Moonlight and good visibility were essential as the pilotage navigator in the nose of the plane scanned the scenery below to ensure it matched their planned route. The navigator set a new course to the northeast and soon began passing over the increasingly mountainous terrain of the French Alps. After a while Lake Geneva, located on the French-Swiss border, came into view in the distance. The target, a clandestine drop zone manned by French Resistance fighters and an SOE agent, was just to the southwest of the lake. As they closed in on the target area, the crew spotted the small fires set up by the agents to mark the drop zone. The pilot slowed his plane to 125 miles per hour,

dropped his flaps, began a descent to a drop altitude of around 500-800 feet above the terrain, and opened his bomb bay doors. Following the pilotage navigator's directions, the pilot gently maneuvered his big airplane toward the signal fires. The execute command was called out on the intercom and the load of containers and packages dropped into the darkness. The SOE agent later reported by radio to SOE headquarters that the supplies were somewhat scattered, but were recoverable. The pilot climbed a few thousand feet, turned back to the southwest and headed for home. But it was a long way back and before reaching the safety of the Mediterranean Sea the B-17 got off course in clouds. The crew found themselves a bit too close to a German base and their plane was bracketed by a barrage of anti-aircraft fire. Two engines were hit. One engine had to be shut down right away, and once they made it over the coast the second damaged motor was shut off. They slowly flew back to Algeria on two engines. On the last leg of the flight, a third engine began badly acting up, perhaps from the strain of a continuous high power setting, but the pilot was able to safely land his crippled B-17 on an emergency airstrip on the Algerian coast. First mission: complete.

The Special Flight Section flew only this one combat mission before it was transferred on 1 November 1943 to the new Fifteenth Air Force as a detachment of the 122nd Liaison Squadron, 68th Reconnaissance Group. Also in November, the detachment was redeployed from Massicault, Tunisia to Blida airfield, Algeria which was closer to its main target areas in France. In the following months the three B-17 crews of the 122nd Liaison Squadron, 68th Reconnaissance Group continued to fly special operations missions into southern France during every moonlight period, weather permitting. Their primary task in these flights was to infiltrate a robust network of OSS Secret Intelligence agents who were charged with creating a detailed picture of the German units and defenses that the Allies would face in the upcoming DRAGOON amphibious landings scheduled for August 1944.

In October 1943, just as the Special Flight Section's B-17's were becoming operational, the US Twelfth Air Force allocated seven North American B-25 Mitchell two-engine medium bombers for OSS support. The B-25 element was initially organized at Massicault, Tunisia using B-25C's and D's and flying crews from various Twelfth Air Force bombardment groups. But the Mitchells did not have the endurance needed to fly long range missions to the OSS's primary targets in southern France so they were sent to Manduria airfield in southern Italy from where they could reach drop zones in the Balkans or northern Italy. Prior to starting operations for the OSS in Italy the B-25's were thoroughly tested in practice missions near the OSS base in Algeria. In these tests the OSS determined that a B-25 could only carry about one third as many air-droppable supply containers as a B-17 and only about one fourth as many as a B-24 could carry. Worse still, the OSS (mistakenly) concluded that a B-25 could not safely be flown slowly enough for agent parachute drops (125 miles per hour). The OSS would have preferred to have more B-17's or some B-24's, but for the time being they pressed ahead with what they got from the air force.



**Black B-24D of CARPETBAGGER group, England 1944.**

(Photo courtesy of the Moore Collection)

In November 1943 the B-25's arrived at Manduria, Italy and began flying missions in support of the OSS unit based at Bari, Italy. Their basic job was to drop supplies to Partisan groups in Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania but they were soon used for the more specialized task of dropping supplies to various special operations teams that were assisting downed Allied aviators who were evading capture by the German occupation forces. At the end of May 1944 both the air force and the OSS decided they no longer required the use of the B-25's. The Mitchell detachment continued to fly special operations drop missions into Italy and the Balkans until June 1944 and then were taken off further OSS duties.

Beginning in February 1944 conventional transport ("troop carrier") squadrons of the US Twelfth Air Force began flying missions in support of the OSS base at Bari, Italy. These C-47 equipped units based in southern Italy were used to parachute and air-land supplies to Partisan groups in Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania and northern Italy. Unlike the B-17's and B-25's, the C-47's were unarmed and unarmored, and they did not have bomb bays from which to quickly drop their load of supplies. Bundles of supplies had to be pushed out of a side cargo door by load dispatchers and smaller packages of equipment could be dropped in "parapacks" mounted externally under the fuselage.

Many C-47 missions however, especially those into the Balkans, involved landing within German-occupied territory on crude airstrips carved out of the rocky and mountainous terrain by Partisans. By landing on these airstrips the C-47's could carry far more cargo and could offload large numbers of personnel, and take out large numbers of wounded Partisans. The typical C-47 troop carrier crew involved in special operations missions in southern Europe included a pilot, copilot, navigator, radio operator and a flight engineer. On some missions one or two load dispatchers, who were

sometimes foreign Partisan personnel, were added to the crew. Frequently, the troop carrier crews took advantage of Allied air superiority over the Balkans by flying their missions in daylight. The C-47's based in Italy provided the lion's share of USAAF air support to Partisans in Italy and the Balkans.

## **Project CARPETBAGGER**

In the meantime, in England, the US Eighth Air Force was taking the initial steps toward establishing a similar capability for northern France. Although the OSS base in London had begun requesting air support from the AAF as early as October 1942, it was not until October 1943 before Eighth Air Force found a means to provide the OSS with airplanes and crews without cutting into the strategic bombing campaign. In August 1943 the US Navy and AAF had signed an agreement that gave the Navy exclusive responsibility for airborne antisubmarine warfare. At the time, Eighth Air Force had been employing its 479th Antisubmarine Group, equipped with long-range four-engine B-24 Liberator bombers, to hunt U-boats in the North Atlantic. These planes and their crews were now available for other work but were deemed unusable for high altitude bombing. Eighth Air Force decided to use its out-of-work antisubmarine warfare B-24 squadrons as the basis for a special operations group to support the operations of OSS/London.

With the means to accomplish the task at hand, in October 1943 HQ Eighth Air Force established an official project, code-named CARPETBAGGER, to provide specialized and dedicated air support to enable the clandestine activities of OSS/London in direct support of the upcoming invasion of Normandy and the follow-on land offensives across northern France.

Flying crews, ground support personnel and B-24D's for CARPETBAGGER were transferred from the 479th



Antisubmarine Group to the 482nd Bomb Group (Special Project) at Alconbury airfield, England in November 1943. While the B-24s were sent a few at a time to maintenance depots to be modified for the night, low-altitude special operations role their air crews were put through an extensive program of ground training provided by veteran instructors from the RAF's special operations squadrons based at Tempsford. Classroom instruction was followed by daytime flying training missions which emphasized low-altitude navigation and air drop procedures. Day flights were followed by nighttime training flights. A few pilots and navigators flew on training flights with experienced RAF crews and a handful even flew with the British on combat missions into France. On one of these familiarization flights an American pilot was killed when his RAF plane crashed into a hillside in England. This loss highlighted the danger of crashing into terrain while flying at low altitude at night as a prevalent hazard of World War II special operations flying.

In January 1944 the personnel and airplanes of the CARPETBAGGER project were designated the 328th Service Group and in February reorganized as the 36th and 406th Bomb Squadrons with the 801st Bombardment Group (Provisional) as their headquarters unit. The group and its squadrons were moved from Alconbury to Watton airfield, and then moved one last time to a permanent base at Harrington airfield, all in England. On the night of 4/5 January 1944 the first CARPETBAGGER mission was flown into France. During January only eight missions were successfully completed into France by the end of the month. As more B-24's were modified and more crews were trained the number of missions successfully completed per month increased steadily. Twenty-one missions were completed in February, forty in March, sixty in April, and 113 in May.



*About the Author: Col Bernard V. Moore II, USAF (Ret) served in the Air Force 1977-2005. Bernie was a pilot who flew one tour in the C-130E SOLL, three tours in the MC-130E Combat Talon and one in the MC-130P Combat Shadow. He did one assignment with the 7th SOS, two with the 8th SOS, and one with the 550th SOS, commanded the 8th SOS, 4411th Rescue Squadron, and 58th Operations Group. Bernie completed staff tours at HQ AFSOC, HQ JSOC, HQ USSOCOM, HQ USPACOM and HQ USAF. Operational deployments included the Bosnian War, Invasion of Panama, Southern Watch, and the Invasion of Iraq. He attended Air Command and Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College, Army War College, and the USAF School of Advanced Airpower Studies. As a civilian Bernie worked for USSOCOM as a contractor 2005-2009, and in Civil Service 2009-2015. He has a BA in History, an MS in Aeronautical Science and MA in Advanced Airpower Art.*

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