

OPTIMIZATION WITHIN UNITED STATES
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

OPTIMIZATION WITHIN UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND,
by LT Robert Davis, USN, 110 pages.

The United States Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) components from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force Special Operations Forces (SOF) often deploy in the same theater, but are separated into Special Operation Service Component Commands (SOSCCs.) This separation acts as a barrier in the optimization of USSOCOM and the necessity for SOF to utilize this valuable synergy is given impetus when we consider how SOF has been heavily relied on for the past 18 years, specifically in the Global War on Terror (GWOT.) Many service members have lost their lives during operations within the GWOT, and there continues to be no clear solution for stability in many regions. The disjointed SOF communities do not help. The missed potential of enhancing the joint SOF force counters the strategic narrative to build a more lethal force and costs the lives of innocent people in conflict-torn territories.

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ACRONYMS

AFSOF	Air Force Special Operation Forces
ARSOF	Army Special Operation Forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CCTS	Combat Crew Training Squadron
COIN	Counter Insurgency
CCT	Combat Controller Technician
CT	Counter Terrorism
CTJTF	Counter Terrorism Joint Task Force
CWMD	Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction
DA	Direct Action
D2D	Dwell to Deployment ratio
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FSSF	First Special Service Force
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
GWOT	Global War On Terror
ISR	Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance
JCET	Joint Combined Exercise Training
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
JSOU	Joint Special Operations University
JTF	Joint Task Force
MARSOC	Marine Corps Special Operations Command

MFP	Major Force Program
NDCU	Navy Demolition Combat Units
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
ROK	Republic of Korea
SEAL	Sea, Air, and Land
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SO	Special Operations
SOF	Special Operation Forces
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOSCC	Special Operations Service Component Command
SOTF	Special Operation Task Force
SR	Special Reconnaissance
TSOC	Theatre Special Operations Command
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United States Code
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
VC	Viet Cong

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have conducted Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Security Force Assistance (SFA), and Counter Insurgency (COIN) operations at a large scale in the Middle East and several other countries around the world. As of February 2018, 8,300 SOF personnel are deployed to 90 countries around the globe at any given point in time.¹ These fights on the Global War On Terror (GWOT) have struggled for permanent stability, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, evidenced by the fact that U.S. forces still deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq. The conflicts in those two countries have cost the lives of approximately 500,000 service members, national security forces, and civilians,² and have cost the U.S. alone approximately \$5.9 trillion.³ There may have been times when mission accomplishment was within sight, but as of this year, 2019, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) remains heavily relied upon to be the

¹ U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General Raymond A. Thomas, U.S. Army Commander United States Special Operations Command Before the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Threats and Capabilities* (Washington, DC, February 15, 2018), accessed February 16, 2019, https://www.socom.mil/Documents/PostureStatements/2018USSOCOMPostureStatement_HASC_Final.pdf.

² Daniel Brown, “Here’s How Many People Have Died in the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq,” *Task & Purpose*, last modified April 15, 2019, accessed March 02, 2019, <https://taskandpurpose.com/afghanistan-iraq-death-toll>.

³ Amanda Macias, “America Has Spent \$5.9 Trillion on Wars in the Middle East and Asia Since 2001, a New Study Says,” *CNBC*, last modified November 15, 2018, accessed 03 March 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/14/us-has-spent-5point9-trillion-on-middle-east-asia-wars-since-2001-study.html>.

surgical tool in the GWOT. There is an apparent problem when all U.S. Joint SOF forces participating in the GWOT operations who do not deploy in similar cycles, are dependent on conventional services, and are organized in separate SOSCCs. Through optimization, USSOCOM is a more effective and lethal force with the designation as the sixth US military service in order to better address the frictions of land locked conflicts, continued national reliance in the GWOT and inter-dependence on conventional services.

Primary Research Question

How can the Special Operations Service Component Commands (SOSCCs) within USSOCOM, improve optimization to enhance mission accomplishment? In more detail, the primary question will analyze the various aspects of the SOSCCs of Army Special Operation Forces (ARSOF), Navy Special Operation Forces (NAVSOF), Air Force Special Operation Forces (AFSOF), and Marine Corps Special Operation Forces (MARSOF) to see what issues and improvements within the command could be optimized to lead to more successful operations within the Geographic Combatant Command's (GCC) campaign. Below is the current structure of USSOCOM, and this paper will discuss how unification of the SOSCCs lead will solve several issues.

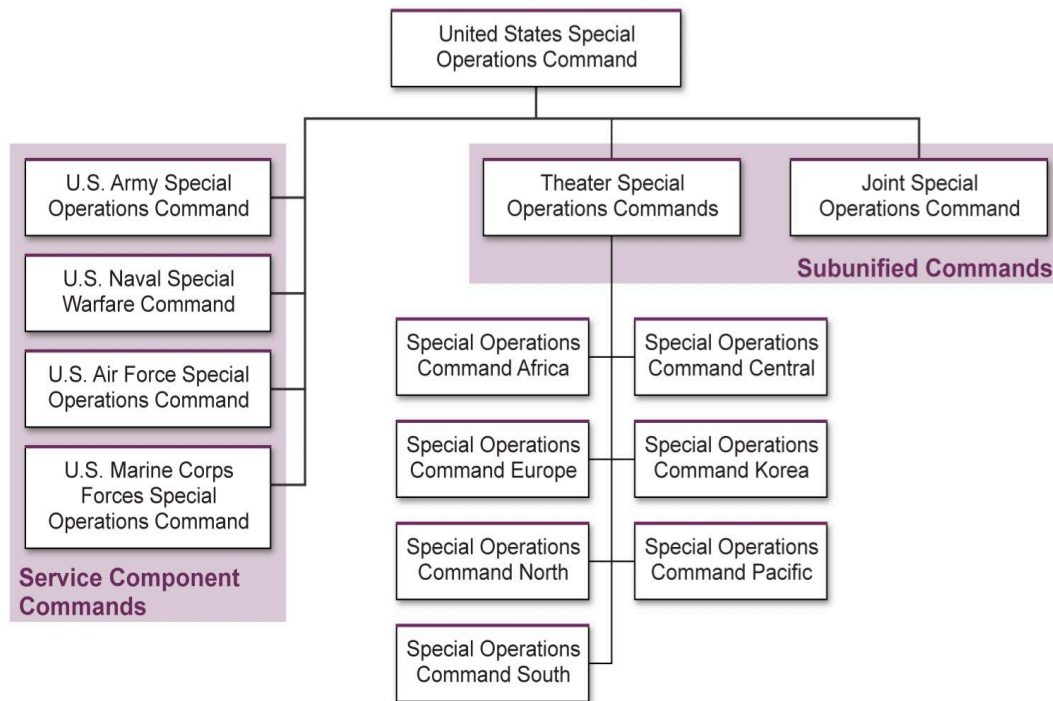


Figure 1. Special Operations Command Organizational Structure

Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-05, *Joint Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014), accessed March 4, 2019, http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_05.pdf.

Secondary Research Questions

Several aspects need examination within USSOCOM in order to gain a full understanding of the organization and some of its disjointed hindrances. The secondary questions aim to breakdown and analyze USSOCOM's disjointed aspects in order to identify problems and recommend a solution.

1. What is the formational background of USSOCOM and how did that give shape to each SOSCC's purpose?
2. According to the special operations doctrine, what are the purposes, functions, and core activities for each SOSCC?

3. What authorities and directives is USSOCOM entitled to and how are they similar and different to Conventional Services?
4. How has the U.S.'s reliance on SOF negatively impacted USSOCOM?
5. Are there examples of a military force modifying its structure that resulted in an improvement toward mission success?
6. What changes, if any, should be made to the USSOCOM structure to benefit mission accomplishment?

Assumptions

The special operations doctrine defines the task and purpose of the SOSCCs. An assumption is the doctrine is adhered to or is a written truth of a SOF component. All doctrine examined will be unclassified and may limit understanding of the gaps in capabilities amongst the different services. It is also an assumption that the issues addressed in this paper are current. It is possible that an effort is being conducted at the time of this writing to address specific problems in this paper. Also due to the sensitive nature of SOF, many findings are five or more years old. It is also possible classified information may have drawn solutions on the specific problems stated in this thesis.

Definition of Terms

Core Activity - SOF are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to accomplish the 11 core activities: direct action, special reconnaissance, counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, security force assistance, counterinsurgency, information

operations (IO), military information support operations (MISO), and civil affairs operations.⁴

Disjointedness - A term used by the author to describe when two or more services are not achieving unity of effort.

Interoperability - The ability to operate in synergy in the execution of assigned tasks.⁵ This paper refers to interoperability as the synergy in the execution of assigned tasks between SOSCCs.

Irregular warfare - A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s).⁶

ISR - Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance. Also commonly referred to as an unmanned or manned air asset.

Joint Servicing - That function performed by a jointly staffed and financed activity in support of two or more Services.⁷

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Joint Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014), accessed March 4, 2019, http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_05.pdf.

⁵ Military Factory, “Interoperability,” 2018, accessed May 15, 2019, https://www.militaryfactory.com/dictionary/military-terms-defined.asp?term_id=2784.

⁶ Military Factory, “Irregular Warfare,” 2018, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.militaryfactory.com/dictionary/military-terms-defined>.

⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 8, 2010, as Amended through February 15, 2013).

Optimization - an act, process, or methodology of making something (such as a design, system, or decision) as fully perfect, functional, or effective as possible.⁸

SOSCC - This refers to the service component commands that fall under USSOCOM, i.e. NSW, USASOC, AFSOC, MARSOC.

SOF - Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations, also called SOF. (Approved for incorporation into JP 1-02.)⁹

Special Forces - United States Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities, also called SF. (Approved for incorporation into JP 1-02.)¹⁰

SEAL - Sea, Air, and Land. Naval Special Warfare special operation operator.

Special Operations - Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk. (Approved for incorporation into JP 1-02.)¹¹

⁸ Merriam-Webster, "Optimization," 2018, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/optimization>.

⁹ JCS, JP 3-05.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Limitations

This paper will not cover solutions involving strategy of COIN operations in the Middle East. This research is focused on the understanding of USSOCOM, the SOSCCs, and identifying problems that may assist in the fight against an insurgency. This research will also not involve the interoperability of conventional and special operation forces within irregular warfare or large scale land operations. Again, creating a better USSOCOM will assist in the unity of effort between conventional forces and SOF, but this paper will not analyze that topic.

The author's experience and time in service is a limitation. The problems addressed are discussed in open source information and are relevant to the author's experiences. There is potential for greater fidelity toward this research through classified material, or another SOF member's experiences to address SOSCC problems.

The author's bias toward NSW is another limitation. Being a part of NSW there is a calling in the command for SEALs to revitalize their diving capabilities and return to their underwater roots. The other side to this argument, however, is when there is a significant crisis in landlocked countries, other SOSCCs are going to need to be surged for additional troops. The surge is to assist in the number of days that SOF have spent away from home and families. The number of days spent at home compared to days deployed (dwell: deployment cycle) for ARSOF SF is close to 2:1, while NSW is 3:1, MARSOF is 2:1, and AFSOF varies as they augment as enablers to the other components.¹² With the current mindset of maintaining proficiency in special operations,

¹² U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), "C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational

all SOF components need to be versatile enough to conduct all tasked special operations in order to surge efforts toward more low intensity conflicts.

A significant limitation of the thesis is the content analysis and case study methodology. There would be a great benefit to interviewing current USSOCOM and various SOSCC members to gain a greater understanding of disjointed problems. However, the interview and survey processes are very time consuming and difficult to complete in conjunction with the MMAS course material in one year.

Scope and Delimitations

Due to the complexities of writing a classified thesis, this paper will remain unclassified. Any information obtained is unclassified and open source. Some factors the reader will have to consider is the possibility some of the problems proposed may be addressed on a classified network. However, the topics of SOF within this paper relies on unclassified material.

The Significance of the Study

This study could identify some collective problems within USSOCOM. Analysis and recommendations may suggest organizational change and operational change to the four star command. The study intends to not only research the structure and doctrine of the Functional Combatant Command (FCC), but looks toward understanding and changing the military's perspective on SOF employment that could lead to more effective operators or employment of SOF.

Considerations" (Lecture, P940: SOF Preparatory Course, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Lecture, August 2018.

Summary

This thesis very simply will look into the optimization of USSOCOM. In specific topics, it will cover, history, doctrine, national and command level authorities, finance and personnel increases, inter-service communication, and case studies for solutions to inter-organizational problems. Each of these topics will be analyzed to give an understanding of USSOCOM, its components, and how they have been operating. The topics are to shed light on where disjointedness still exists, and how that affects the command, the U.S., and the countless lives SOF impacts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will analyze sources addressing topics or areas within USSOCOM that create friction toward optimization. Due to the methodology of the paper being a historical, content analysis, and case study mixture, several sources are combined in an analysis toward a topic of friction. The organization of the literature review is into topics of friction outlined by the thesis significant sources that contribute to its analysis. The topics in the secondary questions involve historical framework, doctrine, authorities, and three case studies. The historical framework will lead this chapter to give an understanding of each SOSCC's contributions and development since WWII, and the other topics are to give an understanding of USSOCOM's disjointed themes.

Historical Framework

The logical starting point in evaluating the potential optimization of SOF is in its history. Elizabeth Johnson, a distinguished Catholic theologian, said, "... to see something coming into historical existence is also to be able to see it passing away. This is so because historical knowledge enables one to realize that what exists today is not necessarily thereby immutable decree, but began and developed in particular circumstances and for reasons of benefit to at least a few people."¹³ In other words, to see why SOF and USSOCOM came into being enables one to see how it is not bound to its

¹³ Elizabeth Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998), 93.

current structure but is free to innovation and change. However, it is essential to understand the original intentions of USSOCOM's design, to understand its positives and negatives in the current environment.

The history of Special Operations (SO) includes covert, small force operations with high impact, and perhaps traces back to the Trojan horse of ancient Greece.¹⁴ For this paper, the analysis is narrowed to U.S. SOF history and is broken down into three parts: pre-creation of USSOCOM, the creation of USSOCOM, and post creation of USSOCOM. The task of examining each SOF component will include an account of the component's origin, its distinct core activities, and how this compares to other SOF core activities, organizational advances, and reoccurring problems. Finally, the most recent posture statement of 2018 will give the reader the final perspective from the eyes of the previous commander, General Raymond Thomas, of USSOCOM's concerns, threats, and direction.

Organizational Origin

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) stands as one of the earliest organizational formations of special operations in the United States. Established in 1942 by William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the OSS was an agency placed under the Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) tasked with collecting foreign intelligence, carrying out propaganda, and covert

¹⁴ Tactical Life, "The Trojan Horse: The Original Spec Ops Mission," *Special Operations Magazine*, August 23, 2016, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://www.tactical-life.com/lifestyle/military-and-police/special-ops-trojan-horse/>.

activities.¹⁵ The OSS formed Operational Groups that deployed trained operatives behind enemy lines. These operatives trained in foreign language, parachuting, amphibious landing, radio operation, and espionage tactics.¹⁶ Operational Groups deployed to France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Burma, Malaya, and China.¹⁷ The OSS units discussed below achieved extraordinary successes in WWII with tales of extraordinary bravery and courage. The end of WWII and the demobilization of the military accompanied the termination of OSS on 20 September 1945, by an Executive Order.¹⁸ Since the OSS was one of the first organizations that put together intelligence collection and operations, most records transferred to the establishment of the CIA in 1947.¹⁹

Individual Component Origins

ARSOF - WWII

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) can trace their lineage to General Eisenhower's employment of the Jedburgh Teams. Covert teams that usually consisted of two to four

¹⁵ Office of Strategic Services, United States Army Special Operations Command, "The Beginning," accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.soc.mil/OSS/the-beginning.html>.

¹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "The Office of Strategic Services -- America's First Intelligence Agency," last modified November 21, 2012, accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/experience-the-collection/text-version/stories/the-office-of-strategic-services-americas-first-intelligence-agency.html>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "About the Records," 2017, accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/oss>.

Soldiers from the U.S, England, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, the Jedburgh teams were parachuted all across Germany occupied France, Belgium, and the Netherlands on the night of June 5th, 1944. With 93 teams across the three countries, their mission was to supplement existing special operations to arm and organize resistance, arrange for supply drops, procure intelligence, and take part in sabotage operations.²⁰ Between June and September of 1944, 276 Jedburgh teams dropped behind enemy lines.²¹ The Jedburgh teams diverted significant German assets and cut off lines of communication, assisting conventional operations. These actions allowed the allies to advance rapidly and once the Jedburgh team's area of operation was taken over, their mission was complete.²² The Jedburgh teams came out of WWII with many accomplishments, but a multitude of problems were apparent as well.

Reflecting in some cases a contempt for rear echelon personnel, Jedburghs complained of unrealistic planning, inadequate briefings, confusing command and liaison arrangements, and an embarrassing lack of response to repeated requests for supplies. One Jedburgh team, assured by a briefing officer that it would be deployed to an area free of Germans, landed in the middle of an enemy parachute division. Reflecting a lack of policy toward the resistance, the OSS men received little guidance in handling different political factions... In addition, most OSS personnel found that Allied tactical commanders had little grasp of their work and missions and often ignored their intelligence reports and offers of assistance.²³

²⁰ Office of Strategic Services (OSS), United States Army Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), "Jedburghs," 2011, accessed February 24, 2019, <https://www.soc.mil/OSS/jedburghs.html>.

²¹ David W. Hogan, Jr., "U.S. Army Special Operations in WWII" (CMH Pub 70-42, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), 1992), accessed February 28, 2019, https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-42/CMH_Pub_70-42.pdf.

²² OSS, USSOCOM, "Jedburghs."

²³ Hogan, "U.S. Army Special Operations in WWII."

The Jedburghs identified the potentially deadly mistake of conventional commanders employing special operation troops incorrectly. The lack of doctrine and late employment of the Jedburghs left some of the operators alone and left to their own improvisation on how to sabotage or employ resistance forces. Fortunately the speed of the allied advance in France was faster than expected, relieving the Jedburgh units as the forward line passed.²⁴

In 1942, the First Special Service Force (FSSF) was established during WWII and was another of the US Army's first SF units. The FSSF was a special operation unit comprised of U.S. and Canadian soldiers designed to conduct unconventional warfare (UW) behind Nazi Germany territory.²⁵

One of the FSSF's most daring missions, colloquially known as the Devil's Brigade, involved the seizure of the fortified position, Monte La Difensa, in 1943. A 943-meter inactive volcano that dominates the approach to Rome, Monte La Difensa was a German stronghold that impeded the Allies approach in the Italian Campaign. The FSSF 5th and 6th Scout Sections took the enormous risk of separating from Allied protection and made a rear infiltration to surprise the enemy. Climbing the volcano in the rain through the rocks and mud with full combat load at a slow and silent pace required herculean efforts. The 5th and 6th Sections caught the German position off guard,

²⁴ Hogan, "U.S. Army Special Operations in WWII."

²⁵ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, "Special Forces History," 2011, accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.soc.mil/USASF/SFhistory.html>.

overwhelmed them, and took the remaining Germans prisoner.²⁶ This victory led to the successive seizures along the Bernhardt Line and proved to be a significant impact for the Allied forces and bolstered the Army SF reputation.²⁷

Another significant attribute to today's SOF was Detachment 101, whose mission was to collect intelligence in Burma, locate targets for air strikes, rescue down Allied aircrew, and recruit native troops, provided strategic impacts toward the allies' victory.²⁸ Serving under the Coordinator of Information (COI), the predecessor to the OSS, Detachment 101 was one of the first UW units. Behind the Japanese enemy lines, the unit cut off lines of communication, ambushed Japanese troops, and supported the British 14th Army in the recapture of the Burmese coast.²⁹ Having conducted special operations for 3 years by 1945, Detachment 101 had 5,500 enemies killed with fewer than 30 American deaths.³⁰ Detachment 101 was proof that small units could have a significant impact.

²⁶ Canadian Armed Forces, "Amongst the Eagles – The Battle of Mount La Difensa," YouTube video, 8:06, June 5, 2014, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLG4F4eqkA>.

²⁷ U.S. Army Center of Military History, "Chapter 2, Special Operations in the Mediterranean," accessed April 3, 2019, <https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/70-42/70-422.htm>.

²⁸ Office of Strategic Services, United States Army Special Operations Command, "Detachment 101," accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.soc.mil/OSS/det-101.html>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

ARSOF - Korean War

After WWII, President Truman disbanded the OSS, and unconventional operations disappeared.³¹ It was not until the National Security Act of 1947, which created the CIA that the government acknowledged its need for UW.³² In 1950, the Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace, forced the Army to activate the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare that officially established a branch responsible for UW.³³ Six months into the Korean War, intelligence sources confirmed 10,000 partisan guerrilla resistance fighters, and shortly after, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) Attrition Section was in charge of guerrilla operations with the partisan units. The partisans organized themselves into training, and operating bands infamously called “Donkeys.”³⁴ After months of training the Donkeys started conducting several operations, some without advisors and some with joint U.S. service support. Some accredited missions included raids killing 280 enemies, cutting North Korean Lines of Communication (LOCs), and a raid on a fortified position followed by a controlled detonation of an enemy 76mm gun.³⁵ The Donkeys accredited once again the Army’s capability, and the U.S. need for UW.

³¹ John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Special Warfare: The Evolution of Special Warfare Training* 16, no. 2 (August 01, 2003), accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8229>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

ARSOF's role in Korea had significant impacts on the development of the UW doctrine and was tested again in the Vietnam War.

ARSOF - Vietnam

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy ordered 400 SF soldiers into Vietnam to act as special advisors for the South Vietnamese forces. Green Beret forces quickly gained a rapport with the Montagnards, "Mountain Men," a tribe that controlled vast areas of the central highlands of Vietnam. Within a few months, they built a program that boasted 13,000 men. SF training empowered the tribes to coordinate quick reaction forces, and conduct security patrols against the Viet Cong (VC) guerrilla groups. The South Vietnamese unrest and need for the organization was rampant throughout the region, and SF unconventional forces gained popularity.

Concreting their impact, the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) created 84 training camps comprised of 42,000 tribesmen participating in a new force program called the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG.) In 1965, 5th SFG headquarters outlined the mission objectives to be, "(1) border surveillance and control, (2) operations against infiltration routes, (3) operations against VC war zones and bases."³⁶ As the U.S. committed large conventional waves of forces to Vietnam, the CIDG also grew, peaking at "72,400 total indigenous paramilitaries advised."³⁷ The impact of the CIDG is shown

³⁶ Francis Kelly, "Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971" (CMH Pub 90-23-1, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), 2004), accessed February 16, 2019, https://history.army.mil/html/books/090/90-23-1/CMH_Pub_90-23-1.pdf, 77.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

in the table below that depicts a sample of combat operations data in the first quarter of 1966 and 1967, with 7,000 enemies killed in 1967 alone.³⁸

Item	1st Quarter 1966	1st Quarter 1967	Percentage of Change
All operations	72,597	78,249	+7
Night operations	24,920	29,010	+16
Contacts	878	1,061	+21
Enemy killed (body count)	1,348	1,912	+42
Enemy captured	595	445	-25
Weapons captured	431	585	+37
USASF/CIDG killed	616	446	-28
USASF/CIDG wounded	344	1,080	+215
USASF/CIDG missing	319	319	..
Weapons lost	432	344	-20

Figure 2. CIDG’s Impact in the Vietnam War

Source: Francis Kelly, “Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971” (CMH Pub 90-23-1, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), 2004), accessed February 16, 2019, https://history.army.mil/html/books/090/90-23-1/CMH_Pub_90-23-1.pdf, 77.

The Army’s Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) are some of the founding units that specialized in Special Reconnaissance (SR.) Typically an LRRP consisted of a six-man team that conducted long patrols deep into enemy territory to gather intelligence. The LRRPs were comprised of volunteer Army members in Vietnam, typically from SF units that trained in the Recondo School—a highly specialized school that gave a crash

³⁸ Kelly, “Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971,” 109.

course on combat survival in three weeks, with live missions against enemy VC as the final graduation exam. Some of their missions included battle damage assessments, wiretapping, field assassinations, sensor emplacement, and ambush capture missions. LRRPs were often inserted for days at a time and carried heavy packs with food and water making movement difficult and slow in the VC jungle. By the end of the Vietnam War, LRRPs had conducted 2,300 long-range patrols with two-thirds of the patrols resulting in enemy sightings, and an estimated 10,000 enemy killed. In 1961, the 75th Ranger Regiment absorbed the LRRPs, but the Army still saw the value of LRRPs' capability and created the Long Range Surveillance (LRS).³⁹

NSW - WWII

The forefathers of the Navy SEALs and SWCC came from five separate units: Naval Demolition Combat Units (NDCUs), Scouts and Raiders, Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs), OSS swimmers, and Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons.⁴⁰ Together these units conducted various unconventional missions including hydro-reconnaissance, explosive cable and net cutting, explosive destruction of underwater obstacles to enable major amphibious landings, limpet mine attacks, submarine operations, locating and marking of mines for minesweepers, riverine surveys, and foreign military training.⁴¹

³⁹ Killer, "Special Forces LRRPs Vietnam Military Files Documentary Films," YouTube video, last modified December 16, 2016, accessed January 20, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMzxEuVkweU>.

⁴⁰ Navy SEALs, "Navy SEAL History," accessed April 2, 2019, <https://navyseals.com/nsw/navy-seal-history/>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Each experimental unit was combat tested during WWII. During the D-Day invasion of Normandy, NDCUs and UDTs led the clearances of Omaha Beach and Utah Beach for the allied amphibious forces to penetrate onto the beach. Under heavy fire, they were first on the beach making great sacrifices and suffered a 52 percent casualty rate.⁴² The UDTs and NDCUs assisted in the destruction of beach barricades and assisted the Allied forces to land closer to the beach.

During the island hopping campaign of WWII, these special maritime units were a crucial source in reconnaissance. They developed combat swimming tactics, making an initial insert via rubber raid craft and then swimming inshore with only their mask, fins, UDT shorts, and knife to evade reefs, destroy obstacles, and to guide the central element onto the beaches. Thus the WWII UDTs were the originators of the nickname of Frogman.⁴³

NSW - Korean War

In the 1950s the United States engaged in the Korean War to counter North Korea's aggressive communist ideology from spreading to the entire nation. Back in action, UDTs used their experiences from WWII and developed demolition tactics and techniques. Those skills were put to use to target bridges, nets, tunnels, and other coastal targets.⁴⁴ One of the UDTs' significant missions was Operation FISHNET, where they

⁴² Navy SEALs, "Navy SEAL History."

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

transported spies into North Korea to sabotage the fishing nets used to supply the North Korean Army, significantly degrading the food source they relied on to feed their soldiers.⁴⁵ UDTs also started operating out of the water and partnered with the Republic of Korea (ROK) UDTs to conduct demolition raids in train tunnels inside North Korea.⁴⁶ These missions were the start of SOF forces blending in mission sets.

NSW - Vietnam

In 1962, President Kennedy consolidated the unconventional maritime communities and established SEAL Team ONE and SEAL Team TWO.⁴⁷ Designed to be the maritime counterpart to SF, both SEAL Teams deployed immediately to Vietnam working within the deltas, rivers, and canals to conduct guerrilla warfare and disrupt maritime lines of communication.⁴⁸ SEALs were so effective in their nighttime DA raids and capture missions, the enemy referred to them as “men with green faces.”⁴⁹

Brown water operations conducted along the Mekong Delta were the founding actions that developed riverine Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures (TTPs.) SEALs paired with Brown Water Navy Boat Crews found themselves frequently in close quarter small arms fire fights with the VC. Working inside North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

⁴⁵ Navy SEALs, “Navy SEAL History.”

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

under the Studies and Observation Group (SOG), SEALs formed Detachment Bravo, tasked to work with South Vietnamese Provincial Units (PRU).⁵⁰ As PRU advisors, SEALs would live within the villages of the fighters creating close bonds and in-depth training. Together the PRUs and SEAL advisors are accredited with killing 20,000 VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA), with postwar North Vietnamese records confirming they were the most oppositional force.⁵¹

AFSOF - WWII

One of the earliest AFSOF units was the 12th Air Force's 5th Bombardment Wing conducting covert resupply and parachutist infiltrations into France during WWII.⁵² This unit fell under the Army Air Force (AAF) and was under the direction of the OSS.⁵³ One of the largest units in the AAF was the 801st Bombardment Group, also known as the Carpetbaggers. They flew highly modified B-24s painted black to conduct their special operations delivering agents, leaflets, and supplies, and participated in Operation OVERLORD dropping Jedburgh teams behind enemy lines to provide critical

⁵⁰ Navy SEALs, "Navy SEAL History."

⁵¹ Dick Couch, "SEALS: 50 Years and Counting," *Naval History Magazine*, 26, no. 1 (January 2012), U.S. Naval Institute, accessed December 15, 2018, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/navalhistory/2012-01/seals-50-years-and-counting>.

⁵² Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), "Heritage of the Special Operations Professionals," last modified November 14, 2005, accessed December 15, 2018, <https://www.afsoc.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/495017/air-force-special-operations-command-brief-history/>.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

intelligence before to the invasion of Normandy.⁵⁴ In the Pacific, the 1st Air Commando Group (ACG) was formed in the latter half of 1943. General Henry Arnold directed this creation in order to conduct deep penetrations into Burma that attacked the Japanese while giving aid to British and U.S. ground soldiers such as the aforementioned Detachment 101.⁵⁵ AFSOF had significant impacts on WWII, inserting 9,052 troops, 1,458 pack animals, and 509,083 tons of supplies behind Japanese lines.⁵⁶ Despite these significant contributions to the overall effort, the ACG disbanded during the post-WWII demobilization.⁵⁷

AFSOF - Korean War

Initially, the CIA tasked USAF for special missions during the onset of the Korean War. These tasks included deploying intelligence teams and supplies into South and North Korea. The USAF saw the potential need for a SOF capability and activated, trained, and equipped the 580th, 581st, and 582nd Air Resupply and Communication Wings. The 580th, 581st, and 582nd possessed enhanced capabilities via transporters, seaplanes, helicopters, and bombers platforms designated explicitly for special air operations including, counterinsurgency (COIN), UW, and recovery of downed airmen.

⁵⁴ AFSOC, “Heritage of the Special Operations Professionals.”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

With only one combat wing seeing combat in Korea, the revamping of AFSOF proved too late. In 1953, all three wings demobilized after the Korean War.⁵⁸

AFSOF - Vietnam

In 1961, General Curtis LeMay, the Air Force Chief of Staff, directed the establishment of the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS.) Based out of Hurlburt Field, Florida, the design for CCTS was COIN training and combat operations. They conducted Foreign Internal Defense (FID) in several countries around the world including, Latin America, portions of Africa, the Middle East, and South East Asia. In November 1961, the 4400th CCTS sent a detachment to the Republic of Vietnam.⁵⁹ “Their mission was twofold: conduct combat operations in Vietnam and train South Vietnamese forces for combat operations.”⁶⁰ Supporting Operation FARM GATE, the 4400th CCTS trained members of the South Vietnamese Air Force (SVAF) as well as accompanied them during combat missions. In their first year, the 4400th CCTS flew 4,040 sorties in support of special operations.⁶¹ In 1964, the first fixed-wing gunship was the AC-47, a staple in special operations. Shortly after, the CCTS grew into six squadrons creating the 4410 Combat Crew Training Group (CCTG.) Four years later, in 1969, the

⁵⁸ AFSOC, “Heritage of the Special Operations Professionals.”

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Airman 1st Class Nathaniel Overson, “Before the 6 SOS there was the 4400 CCTS,” Hurlburt Field, April 14, 2009, accessed February 10, 2019, <https://www.hurlburt.af.mil/News/Commentaries/Display/Article/206367/before-the-6-sos-there-was-the-4400-ccts/>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

unit was assigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing. “Today, a portion of the Air Force Special Operations Command’s rich heritage is traceable both directly and indirectly to the 4400 CCTS and the 4410 CCTG.”⁶²

MARSOC - WWII

Today’s MARSOC Raiders name themselves after the elite Raiders that established in WWII. In the 1930s, the Marine Corps experimented with amphibious landings, looking for ways to incorporate small commando forces to raid critical enemy nodes. Led by LtCol. Mike Edson, he suggested that a force much lighter than a traditional infantry platoon would be necessary to conduct special covert inserts and extracts. The Raider battalion was composed of four rifle companies, a weapons company, headquarters company, and demolitions platoon.⁶³ Edson’s battalion successfully conducted a DA raid on the village of Tasimboko in the Solomon Islands, killing several enemy soldiers and collecting valuable intelligence.

The documents obtained during the raids detailed the impending Japanese attack on Guadalcanal. After proving their competence, Edson was ordered to defend the ridgeline that leads into Guadalcanal to prevent enemy forces from advancing. What is known as the Battle of the Bloody Ridge or Battle of Edson’s Ridge, the Raiders went toe

⁶² Overson, “Before the 6 SOS there was the 4400 CCTS.”

⁶³ Al Hemingway, “A Defiant Stand During the Battle at Bloody Ridge,” *Warfare History Network*, accessed April 3, 2019, <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/wwii/a-defiant-stand-during-the-battle-at-bloody-ridge/>.

to toe against the Japanese 124th Infantry supported by Japanese naval fire support.⁶⁴ The Japanese attacked September 12, 1942, with ferocity and came close to overwhelming the Raider lines, but with an unwavering spirit and support from artillery, aviation, and supporting infantry units, Edson's Raiders came out victorious. At the end of the battle on September 13, 600 Japanese soldiers were found dead, and records later showed that 1500 eventually died from wounds of the battle.⁶⁵ A resounding success that saved Guadalcanal, the Raiders demonstrated their ability to conduct deep penetrating direct action operations, integrated fire support, and small unit tactics. However, in 1994 the Raiders were dissolved into the 4th Marines. Commanders in the Marine Corps hierarchy determined that regular Marines could execute missions the Raiders could do, and the Raiders best work was with the support of conventional units.⁶⁶

MARSOC - Vietnam

In 1965, the Marines created the Combined Action Program (CAP) during the Vietnam War. The CAP units conducted FID and COIN with platoons of Vietnamese militia referred to as the Popular Forces (PF.) Their mission was "the destruction of the National Liberation Front infrastructure, the organization of local intelligence networks,

⁶⁴ Hemingway, "A Defiant Stand During the Battle at Bloody Ridge."

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ C. N. Trueman, "US Marine Raiders," The History Learning Site, May 25, 2015, accessed February 8, 2019, <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-two/special-forces-in-world-war-two/us-marine-raiders/>.

and the military training of the PFs.”⁶⁷ Together the CAP Marines and the PF conducted DA raids and night patrols, expanding their territory into broader areas of responsibility to secure. CAP’s success was evident when commands noticed PF partnered with CAP units secured twice as much land as Popular Forces that acted alone.⁶⁸ CAP units were a special Marine force that enabled the civilians of South Vietnam and gave significant contributions to U.S. effort.

Another special USMC unit deployed in Vietnam was the First Reconnaissance Force (Recon.) The unit conducted SR and DA deep behind enemy lines. Due to the dense jungle and the elusive Viet Cong (VC), the Marines established Stingray Patrols in 1966.⁶⁹ Team Primness was a first reconnaissance type unit in Vietnam that acted as a test for the function of the new Stingray Patrols. Similar to the Army’s LRRP, Team Primness was a five to six man unit inserted near suspected enemy positions via helicopter, conducted long clandestine patrols, observed for enemy presence, and called for artillery or fixed-wing fires.⁷⁰ The men were inserted by Huey helicopters and established observation posts for several days. Late in 1966, approximately 800 North Vietnamese conducted an attack that was repelled by Marine rifle companies. Team Primness was inserted to find survivors that slipped into the jungle. After two days

⁶⁷ Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, “Heritage,” accessed February 16, 2019, <https://www.marsoc.marines.mil/About/Heritage/>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

behind enemy lines, Team Primness spotted 200 VC in the open and immediately called for fires via 105mm Howitzers and an F-8 2000 pound bomb.⁷¹ They decimated the enemy with a reported 53 enemy killed and extracted successfully without the loss of a single man.⁷² Proof positive, the Recon Marines continued to be relied on to conduct deep reconnaissance missions.

Creation of USSOCOM

After U.S. forces pulled out of Vietnam, all military forces, including SOF suffered from the demobilization.

[W]ith the American pullout and force downsizing of the mid-to-late '70s, SOF wallowed at the bottom of the trough. Nearly nine active duty Army Special Forces group equivalents shrank to three, all under-strength, one of which was scheduled for imminent deactivation in 1980. SOF aircraft suffered similar reduction fates or were transferred to the Reserves. The Navy decommissioned its only special operations submarine. SOF manning levels in every Service dropped well below authorized strengths. Funding declined precipitously, amounting to about one-tenth of one percent of the U.S. defense budget by 1975.⁷³

Several factors went into the downgrading of SOF. Demobilization described above, and other factors of conventional and special warfare personalities clashed, with fault on both sides.

⁷¹ Pete Nealen, "Force Recon Stingray Patrols," *SOFREP*, last modified August 9, 2016, accessed February 14, 2019, <https://thenewsrep.com/17452/stingray-patrols/>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Lenahan (1998), 199, quoted in Paul Chris, Issac Porche, and Elliot Axelband, "Special Operation Forces Before Special Operations Command," in *The Other Quiet Professionals: Lessons for Future Cyber Forces from the Evolution of Special Forces* (Santa Monica, CA : RAND Corporation, 2014), accessed December 11, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287m89>, 9.

The Special Forces' and other special operators' link with the Central Intelligence Agency gave SOF a freedom in Vietnam that alienated the conventional military. Allegations, and the occasional reality, of such excesses as torture and assassination damned army Special Forces in the eyes of an already suspicious military command and the American people.⁷⁴

One of the most significant factors that limited the capabilities and growth of SOF was their attachment to the services. Each service competes for funding from Congress, and it was common for services not to fund the requests from the individual warfare units.

Time after time, Congress authorized funding for new MC-130 Combat Talons. To be more specific, Congress directed the Air Force to buy more of these special operations airplanes . . . Every year, the Air Force re-programmed those funds and never bought the additional MC-130s.⁷⁵

All these issues became a glaring problem when the SOF units attempted a hostage rescue mission in 1981.

Operation EAGLE CLAW was the mission to rescue 53 Americans from the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran. All services contributed to the mission: Army SOF, Air Force C-130 aircraft and pilots, Navy RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters, and Marine Corps pilots to fly the RH-53Ds. Before the mission started, the minimum force required was six helicopters. As the force began the insertion from the naval aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, two helicopters broke down, unable to continue the mission. At the designated refuel point, Desert One, another helicopter broke down and the ground force commander

⁷⁴ Marquis (1997), 20, quoted in Chris, Porche, and Axelband, "Special Operation Forces Before Special Operations Command," 9.

⁷⁵ Boykin (n.d.), 8, quoted in Chris, Porche, and Axelband, "Special Operation Forces Before Special Operations Command," 9.

aborted. The reason why Operation EAGLE CLAW lives in infamy is that as the assault force began to return to the Nimitz, one of the RH-53D's ran into a C-130, and 8 men died in the crash.⁷⁶ The mission's failure triggered an international incident as Iranian televisions broadcasted the site of the two burning aircraft.

The Holloway Commission was the official investigation into Operation EAGLE CLAW. Conducted by Admiral James Holloway (USN), along with prominent generals from the other Services, the investigation issued the following findings:

A Counterterrorist Joint Task Force (CTJTF) be established as a field agency of the JCSs of Staff with permanently assigned staff personnel and certain assigned forces. The JCSs of Staff give careful consideration to the establishment of a Special Operations Advisory Panel, comprised of a group of carefully selected high-ranking officers (active and/or retired) who have career backgrounds in special operations or who have served at the CINC or JCS levels and who have maintained a current interest in special operations or defense policy matters.⁷⁷

The Holloway Commission also detailed that because the Joint Task Force (JTF) for Operations Eagle had to be assembled entirely from scratch, the ad hoc nature under the pressures of time was the ultimate downfall of the operation. The new CTJTF would be an organization that would be trained and ready to respond if such missions should arise again.⁷⁸ This catalyst led to the creation of 1st U.S. Army Special Operations

⁷⁶ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *History* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM, 2007), accessed April 2, 2019, <https://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/socom/2007history.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Special Operations Review Group, "Rescue Mission Report," Naval History and Heritage Command, August 1980, accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/i/iran-hostage-rescue-mission-report.html>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Command at Fort Bragg in 1982.⁷⁹ However, the other services were reluctant to join. Another event would prove to be the tipping point.

Operation URGENT FURY took place on 25 October 1983, on the South American island of Grenada. In fear of an unstable government and the lives of 600 U.S. medical students on the island, President Regan authorized the mission to evacuate the medical students and influence a democratic government system. Over 7,300 U.S. forces contributed to the operations. Several SOF units were involved in the operation, including units from the 75th Ranger Regiment, SEALs, and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR.) Even though the mission would be an overall success, there were disastrous problems that had to be improved.

The success of Operation URGENT FURY was marred by the consequences of inadequate time for planning, lack of tactical intelligence, and problems with joint command and control. The 21 October news report that US warships had been diverted to Grenada robbed the operation of strategic surprise. The Chairman and ADM McDonald compensated by striking with overwhelming force before the Grenadians or Cubans could react effectively. To protect the force, GEN Vessey compartmentalized planning; however, the restriction excluded experts in logistics, civil affairs, and public affairs. Their absence was felt during the first days of the operation.⁸⁰

Even though General John Vessey (USA) was amongst the planning staff, conventional commanders employed the SOF units incorrectly. The commander of the

⁷⁹ Paul, Porche, and Axelband, “Special Operation Forces Before Special Operations Command,” 9.

⁸⁰ Ronald Cole, “Operation Urgent Fury,” 2014, quoted in Paul, Porche, and Axelband, “Special Operation Forces Before Special Operations Command,” 9.

overall operations was the commander of 2nd Fleet, Vice ADM Joseph Metcalf (USN).⁸¹ One of the most significant mistakes was the launch of the operation minutes before daylight. The light exposed the Ranger air assault, and pinned down isolated SEALs at the Governor-General's residence, and required Marines to conduct a rescue of the SEALs. The U.S. suffered 19 killed (13 SOF) and 116 wounded.⁸²

The failures during Operation URGENT FURY were the final prod to Congress to make reforms. Led by Representative Dan Daniels, Senator Sam Nunn, and Senator William Cohen, Congress and the Senate decided to make a change to the special operations command and control structure, and address the reallocation monies issues. These changes led to the overhaul of the DOD with the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Shortly after, Nunn and Cohen proposed a bill that created a separate department in the DOD with an emphasis on low-intensity conflict and special operations. This bill protects policy and the budget for SOF and also bypasses the JCSs of Staff (JCS), allowing a four-star to report directly to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF.) The bill met with opposition from the JCS but eventually passed with testimony from the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) commander at Operation URGENT

⁸¹ Richard W. Stewart, "Operation Urgent Fury: The Invasion of Grenada October 1983" (CMH Pub 70-114-1, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), 2008), accessed April 2, 2019, https://history.army.mil/html/books/grenada/urgent_fury.pdf.

⁸² Mike Markowitz, "Urgent Fury: U.S. Special Operations Forces in Grenada, 1983," Defense Media Network, June 3, 2013, accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/urgent-fury-u-s-special-operations-forces-in-grenada-1983/3/>.

FURY.⁸³ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) was formed April 16, 1987, with the responsibility to organize, train, and equip U.S. special operations forces from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.⁸⁴

Post-Creation of USSOCOM

Since the creation of USSOCOM in 1987 to January 2019, there have been 11 commanders. Each one faced their own challenges, and all had a significant impact to the command. The first commander, General James Lindsay (USA) decided to keep USSOCOM located at Tampa, FL and not move it to the Pentagon with the rest of the Service Chiefs because he “didn’t want SOCOM to become another staff agency.”⁸⁵ General Lindsay set the priorities to get the command functioning, created the Special Operations funding line Major Force Program 11 (MFP-11), and established command and control relationships with Theater Special Operation Commands (TSOC) who maintain OPCON of SOF units within their respective GCC.⁸⁶ General Lindsay also created the Assistant SECDEF for Special Operations/ Low-Intensity Conflicts (ASD special operations).

⁸³ USSOCOM, *History*.

⁸⁴ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), “USSOCOM Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary,” April 19, 2017, accessed December 30, 2018, <https://www.socom.mil/Pages/USSOCOM-celebrates-its-30th-anniversary.aspx>.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ JCS, JP 3-05.

civilian advisor to the SECDEF on special operations. General Lindsay also persuaded the SECDEF to allow USSOCOM to establish OPCON of NSW and AFSOF.⁸⁷

The second USSOCOM commander, General Carl Stiner (USA) convinced the SECDEF to designate Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) under the USSOCOM structure. General Stiner made sure to praise SOF successes, ensured units participated in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, and saw a 35 percent rise in Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) during his tenure.⁸⁸ The early years of success from USSOCOM affirmed Congress' decision to empower the new command. From 1992-1997, the fourth USSOCOM commander, General Henry Shelton (USA), saw another massive jump of 51 percent in OPTEMPO. SOF units deployed to 142 countries and General Shelton instituted the need to track personnel deployments to prevent overuse.

After September 11, 2001, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) brought a new precedent for the employment of SOF. In 2002, SECDEF Donald Rumsfeld directed USSOCOM to “to develop a plan to find and deal with the international threat of terrorist organizations.”⁸⁹ However, there was not an agreement amongst the GCCs who should take the lead on combating terrorism, and it was not agreed upon that USSOCOM should have authority to direct the GCC's counter-terrorism strategy. General Bryan Brown (USA), seventh commander of USSOCOM, met an eight to one opposition against his

⁸⁷ USSOCOM, “USSOCOM Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary.”

⁸⁸ USSOCOM, *History*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

proposal for USSOCOM to lead the “synchronization” of combatant commands counter-terrorism strategy but convinced the Vice Chairman of the JCS to forward the proposal to SECDEF Rumsfeld.⁹⁰ With approval in the 2004 Unified Command Plan (UCP), President Bush declared USSOCOM would serve “as the lead combatant commander for planning, synchronizing, and as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders.”⁹¹ In the early 2000s to the present, the demand for SOF escalated dramatically and also decreased at some periods of times. As depicted in the graph of FY 2001 to FY 2013, the number of personnel deployed has more than doubled with 4.9 thousand SOF to a peak of 12.9 thousand SOF.⁹² As of 2018 USSOCOM had a “deployed force of approximately 8,300 personnel across 90 countries.”⁹³

⁹⁰ USSOCOM, *History*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Daniel Bilar, “USSOCOM FY 2013 Budget Highlights,” SlideShare, last modified July 3, 2012, accessed January 11, 2019, https://www.slideshare.net/daniel_bilar/ussocom-fy-2013budgethighlights.

⁹³ U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General Raymond A. Thomas*.

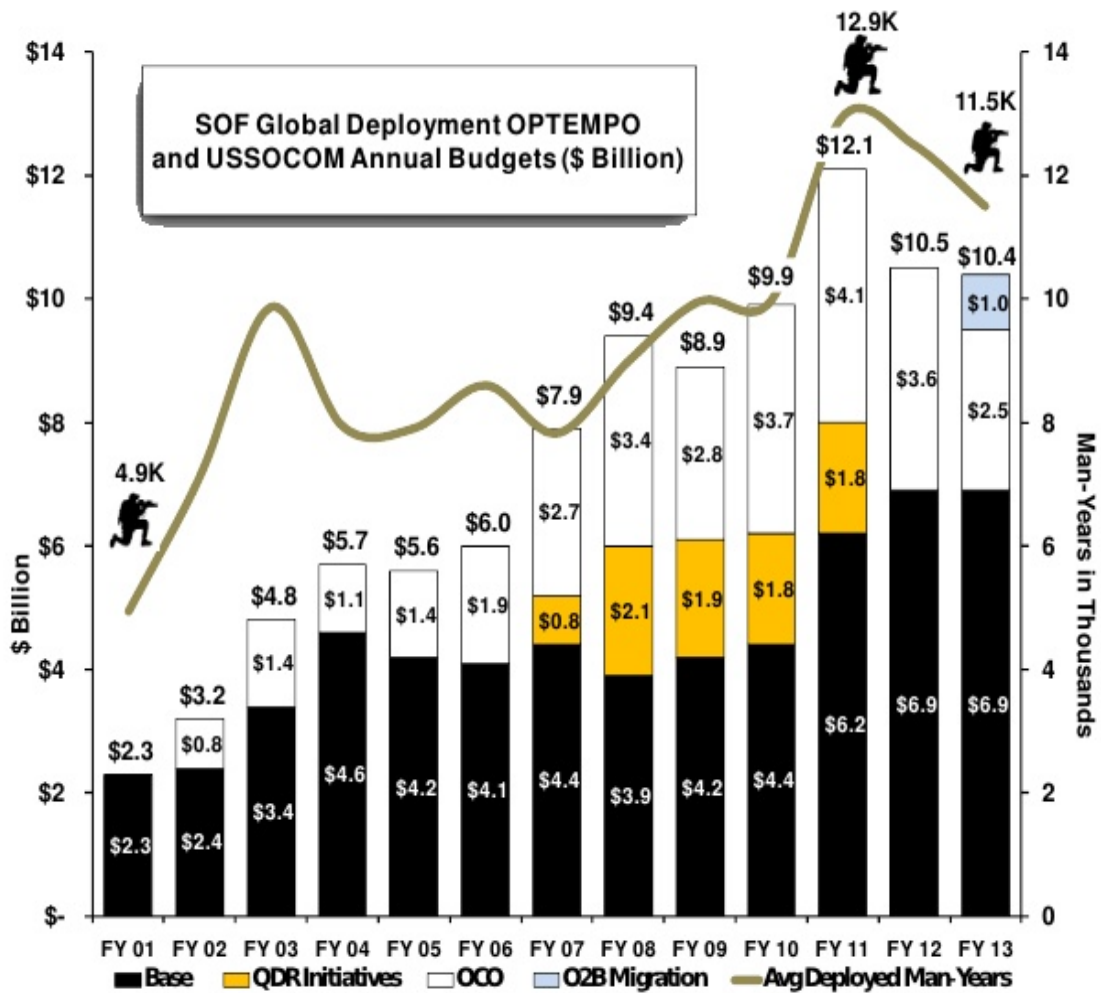


Figure 3. SOF Global Deployment OPTEMPO and USSOCOM Annual Budgets

Source: Daniel Bilar, “USSOCOM FY 2013 Budget Highlights,” SlideShare, last modified July 3, 2012, accessed January 11, 2019, https://www.slideshare.net/daniel_bilar/ussocom-fy-2013budgethighlights.

Doctrine

Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* was published in 2014. The doctrine illuminates USSOCOM’s core activities, structure, component commands, command and control of SOF in theater, and an overview of a JSOTF. This section will discuss those

topics along with the mission of each component command. The core activities are the types of mission sets that all the USSOCOM component commands execute. The activities and their definitions are as follows:

Direct Action - Direct action entails short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted with specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets in hostile, denied, or diplomatically and/or politically sensitive environments.

Special Reconnaissance - Special reconnaissance entails reconnaissance and surveillance actions normally conducted in a clandestine or covert manner to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces (CF).

Unconventional Warfare - UW consists of operations and activities that are conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.

Foreign Internal Defense - Foreign internal defense refers to US activities that support a host nation's (HN's) internal defense and development strategy and program designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their internal security, and stability.

Civil Affairs Operations - Civil affairs operations are actions planned, executed, and assessed by civil affairs to enhance the operational environment; identify and

mitigate underlying causes of instability within civil society; or involve the application of functional specialty skills normally the responsibility of civil government.

Counter Terrorism - Counterterrorism is activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their networks in order to render them incapable of using unlawful violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals.

Military Information Support Operations - Military information support operations (MISO) are planned to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives.

Counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - SOF support USG efforts to curtail the development, possession, proliferation, use, and effects of weapons of mass destruction, related expertise, materials, technologies, and means of delivery by state and non-state actors.

Security Force Assistance - USG security sector reform (SSR) focuses on the way a HN provides safety, security, and justice with civilian government oversight. The Department of Defense's (DOD's) primary role in SSR is to support the reform, restructure, or reestablishment of the HN armed forces and the defense aspect of the security sector, which is accomplished through security force assistance.

Counterinsurgency - Counterinsurgency is a comprehensive civilian and military effort designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.

Hostage Rescue and Recovery - Hostage rescue and recovery operations are sensitive crisis response missions in response to terrorist threats and incidents. Offensive operations in support of hostage rescue and recovery can include the recapture of U.S. facilities, installations, and sensitive material overseas.

Foreign Humanitarian Assistance - Foreign humanitarian assistance is a range of DOD humanitarian activities conducted outside the U.S. and its territories to relieve or reduce human suffering, disease, hunger, or privation.⁹⁴

Each component command has a primacy in certain core activities and may not conduct all special operations core activities. The figure below delineates which component has core activity primacy and where there is overlap.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ JCS, JP 3-05.

⁹⁵ CGSC, "C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations."

Table 1. USSOCOM Core Activities

USSOCOM Activity	USASOC	NAVSOC	AFSOC	MARSOC
Direction Action (DA)	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Special Reconnaissance (SR)	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction	Secondary	Support	Support	Support
Counterterrorism	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Unconventional Warfare	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Foreign Internal Defense	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Security Force Assistance	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Hostage Rescue and Recovery	Support	Support	Support	Support
Counterinsurgency	Support	Support	Support	Support
Foreign Humanity Assistance	Support	Support	Support	Support
Military Information Support Operations (MISO)	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Civil Affairs Operations (CAO)	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Other Activities	Support	Support	Support	Support

Source: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations” (Lecture, P940: SOF Preparatory Course, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Lecture, August 2018).

The structure of USSOCOM is depicted below in Figure 4. The four service component commands and the TSOCs are assigned COCOM under USSOCOM. The TSOCs establish OPCON of deployed SOF units while being assigned to a GCC. The TSOCs plan and conduct operations in support of the GCC. The SECDEF also authorizes support and supporting relationships between USSOCOM and the GCC.⁹⁶ The command and control structure of SOF units becomes very different when deployed, in an operational theater, SOF units from individual SOSCCs form into Special Operation Task Forces (SOTFs.) In cases where more than one SOSCC joins a SOTF, the organization

⁹⁶ CGSC, “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations.”

becomes a Joint SOTF (JSOTF.) Depending on the operation environment, the JSOTF may be working alongside the military services and possibly become OPCON to the Commander, Joint Task Force (CDRJTF.) Continuing up the chain of command and control (C2) depending on the situation, the GCC has COCOM over the Joint Task Force

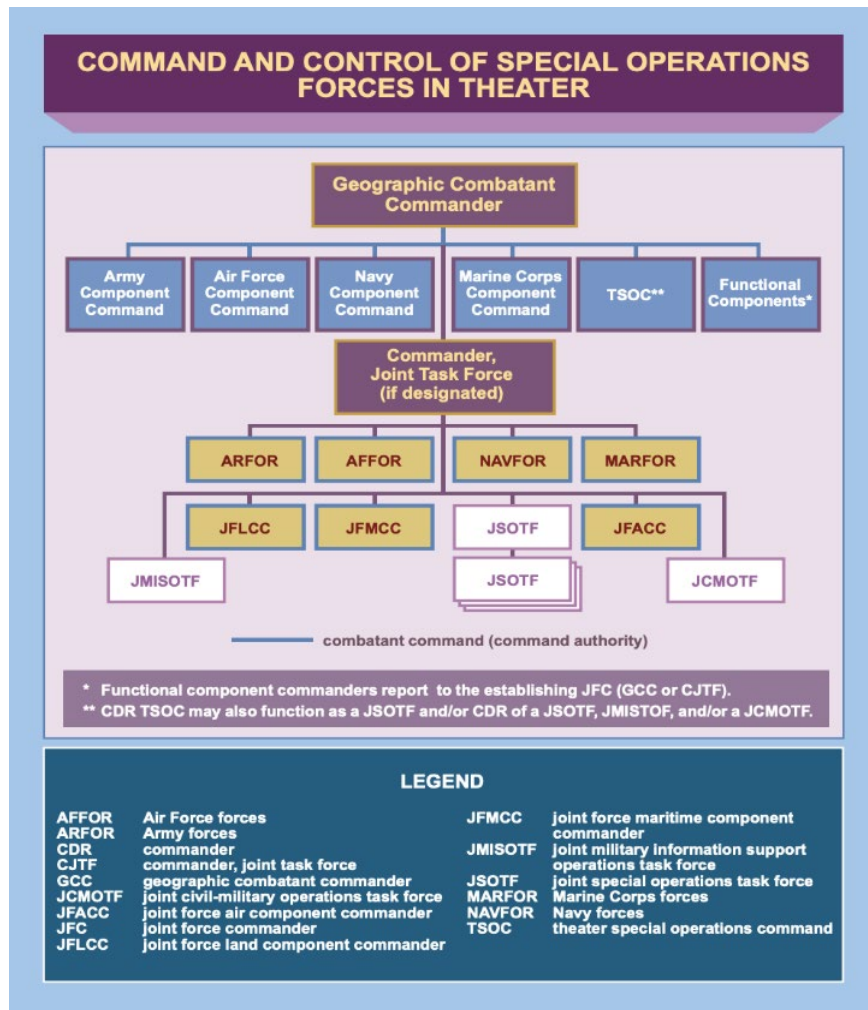


Figure 4. Command and Control of Special Operations Forces in Theater

Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication JP 3-05, *Joint Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014), accessed March 4, 2019, http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_05.pdf.

Commander (JTFC) and has OPCON of the regionally aligned TSOC. This creates various possibilities of C2 for the JSOTF, where the organization may fall directly under the GCC, TSOC, JTFC, or may be designated as the JTFC. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind the TSOC, JSOTF, and SOTF all must integrate within each other and with the other military services in the operational environment. Further discussion will be presented in Chapter 4.

USASOC is the headquarters of all Army SOF. The subordinate commands include 1st Special Forces Command, Special Operations Aviation Command, 75th Ranger Regiment, and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare and Center School. USASOC “generates and sustains Army Special Operations Forces to conduct worldwide Special Operations across the range of military operations in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, American Ambassadors, and other agencies as directed.”⁹⁷ USASOC comprises about 54 percent of USSOCOM’s military end strength as of FY17.⁹⁸

NAVSPECWARCOM is the headquarters for all Naval SOF. The subordinate command includes six Groups, Development Group, and Naval Special Warfare Center. The Groups consist of eight SEAL Teams, three SEAL Boat Teams, one SDV Team, and

⁹⁷ U.S. Army Special Operations Command,” U.S. Army Special Operations Command,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/USASOCHQ.html>.

⁹⁸ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), “Fiscal Year 2018 President’s Budget (USSOCOM),” last modified May 2017, accessed March 3, 2019, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/FY2018/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PART_1/SOCOM_OP-5.pdf.

supporting commands. The mission of NSW is to “Man, Train, Equip, Deploy and Sustain Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Forces for operations and activities abroad in support of Combatant Commanders and U.S. National Interests.”⁹⁹ NSW comprises about 16 percent of USSOCOM’s military end strength as of FY17.¹⁰⁰ MARSOC is the headquarters for all Marine Corps SOF. The subordinate commands include Marine Special Operations Regiment, Marine Special Operations Support Group, and Marine Special Operations School. MARSOC’s mission is to “recruit, train, sustain, and deploy scalable, expeditionary forces worldwide to accomplish special operations missions assigned by U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM.)”¹⁰¹ MARSOC comprises about 5 percent of USSOCOM’s military end strength as of FY17.¹⁰²

AFSOC is the headquarters for all Air Force SOF. The subordinate commands include eight Special Operation Wings (SOWs), 353rd Special Operation Groups (SOG), and the Special Operations Warfare Center. The 353rd SOG consists of more than 55 aircraft to support special operations. The SOWs include Pararescuemen, Combat Control Technician (CCTs), Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), Special Operations Surgical Teams (SOST), and Special Operations Weather (SOWT.) AFSOF’s mission is, “Provide

⁹⁹ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Naval Special Warfare Command,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.public.navy.mil/NSW/Pages/default.aspx>.

¹⁰⁰ USSOCOM, “Fiscal Year 2018 President’s Budget (USSOCOM).”

¹⁰¹ U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, “Mission & Vision,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://marsoc.com/misson-vision/>.

¹⁰² CGSC, “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations.”

our Nation’s specialized airpower capability across the spectrum of conflict. Any place, anytime, anywhere.”¹⁰³ They comprise of 26 percent of USSOCOM’s military end strength as of FY17.¹⁰⁴

Authorities

USSOCOM has “Service-Like” authorities. Those authorities are stated in the United States Code, Title 10 and are as follows:

Develop special operations strategy, doctrine and tactics, exercise authority, direction and control over special operations expenditures, train assigned forces, conduct specialized courses of instruction, validate requirements, establish requirement priorities, ensure interoperability of equipment and forces, formulate and submit intelligence support requirements, monitor Special Operations officers’ promotions, assignments, retention, training and professional military education, ensure Special Operations Forces’ combat readiness, monitor Special Operations Forces’ preparedness to carry out assigned missions, develop and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, materiel, supplies and services.¹⁰⁵

USSOCOM also is a Functional Combatant Command (FCC) with the following responsibilities: “Command of all U.S. based SOF, synchronize planning for global operations against terrorist networks, deploy SOF to support GCCs, as directed, conduct operations globally, plan & execute pre-crisis activities.”¹⁰⁶ Discussed in the 2018

¹⁰³ U.S. Special Operations Command, “Air Force Special Operations Command,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.socom.mil/Pages/afsoc.aspx>.

¹⁰⁴ CGSC, “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations.”

¹⁰⁵ U.S. Special Operations Command, “Title 10 Authorities,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.socom.mil/about/title-10-authorities>.

¹⁰⁶ CGSC, “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations.”

Posture Statement, Gen. Thomas also stated that USSOCOM has Coordinating Authority that was assigned by the DOD in 2016. The Coordinating Authorities are for Counter Violent Extremist Organizations (CVEO) and Counter WMD (CWMD.) Coordinating Authority is, “the authority delegated to a commander or individual for coordinating specific functions and activities involving forces of two or more Military Departments, two or more joint force components, or two or more forces of the same Service.”¹⁰⁷ USSOCOM has assumed much responsibility to solve the crises in the world, and it has become increasingly crucial that SOF communities train to the best possible proficiency to undertake those significant responsibilities.

Finance

USSOCOM creates a posture statement annually to testify to Congress and the Senate why the command is essential, progress gained over the years, what current problems the organization faces, and how much money the command will need to overcome the challenges it has been assigned. Congress then approves an annual budget toward USSOCOM’s line of money. The SOSCC’s are the driving force for the dollar amount in the budget. Each SOSCCs must compete and fight for relevancy in order to have their projects funded by USSOCOM. That line of money is called Major Force Program-11 (MFP-11.) The conventional services have their line of money as well. It is called MFP-2. The difference is that MFP-11 is only for “SOF peculiar” items, and it not to be spent on service-wide equipment. SOF peculiar is, “Equipment, material, supplies,

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General Raymond A. Thomas*.

and services required for special operations missions for which there is no Service-common requirement. These are limited to items and services initially designed for, or used by, special operations forces until adopted for Service-common use by one or more Military Service.”¹⁰⁸ The acquisition of Service common needs of SOSCCs is through the conventional parent service. This dipping into other organizations’ funding leads to problems when SOF peculiar or Service common is not clearly defined, services must give unequal amounts for capabilities that affect all domains, and this has created rifts between services and USSOCOM.

Personnel

As the GWOT became a spreading priority for USSOCOM, personnel dramatically increased. With around 42,800 personnel in 2001 to approximately 70,000 personnel in 2018, USSOCOM has nearly doubled in size.¹⁰⁹ This massive growth causes concerns about money spent on personnel, redundancy of administrations throughout the components, and ethical concerns. This growth in personnel is to combat the heavy

¹⁰⁸ Deputy Secretary of Defense (SecDef), Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5100.03, “Support of the Headquarters of Combatant and Subordinate Unified Commands” February 9, 2011, incorporating change 1, September 7, 2017, accessed April 8, 2019, <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/510003p.pdf>, 8.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). GAO 15-571, *Special Operations Forces: Opportunities Exist to Improve Transparency of Funding and Assess Potential to Lessen Some Deployments* (Washington, DC: GAO, July 2015), accessed February 26, 2019, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/671920.pdf>.

reliance on USSOCOM. As of 2011, the DOD established a 2:1 Dwell to Deployment (D2D) policy in light of the increase in suicides, divorce rates, and PTSD.¹¹⁰

Inter-service Communication

Inter-service communication is the ability for SOF communities to talk, share, and learn from each other. It is critical that SOF units can execute the core activities and continue to improve upon TTPs. Equally important, SOF units need to understand the lessons learned from deployments in order to learn from past mistakes. The increase in personnel, increase in the number of countries SOF members are deployed to, additional core activities, components with different deployment cycles, four different components with different service bound cultures, and different SOF HQ locations spread throughout the country create several different dynamics and result in specific communication issues for SOSCCs. This topic is a significant problem and due to the classified nature of training, deployment, and After Action Reports (AARs) there is very little information to understand how big or little the gap is in inter-service communication.

Case Studies

The first case study is the Air Force's establishment as a separate service. In WWII, as strategic long-range bombing became a new and developing capability, senior

¹¹⁰ Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Subject: Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) Deployment-to-Dwell, Mobilization-to-Dwell Policy Revision (Washington, DC, November 1, 2013), accessed April 30, 2019, <https://mccareer.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/deployment-to-dwell-instruction.pdf>.

leaders recognized the need for aviation to be a separate service.¹¹¹ This case study is to parallel the idea of the inception of the GWOT creating the need for a new capability that needs to grow and untether from the services.

The second case study is the creation of MARSOC. The Marine Corps opted out of creating a special operations unit when USSOCOM was established in 1986, on the reasoning that Marines are already elite.¹¹² The MARSOC Raiders were established in 2006 and met with resistance amongst the Marine Corps. MARSOC's creation is a testament that the driving force of USSOCOM is the need for operators and not unique capability, because they do not own a unique capability. This truth is not a statement to admonish the Raiders but to catalyze a unification in the standard operator. Why do units that conduct the same core activities, train under different training commands?

The third case study is the lessons learned from Operation EAGLE CLAW. Military services saw a capability gap in counter terrorism after the failure of the operation. The Holloway Commission recommended the creation of a Counter Terrorism Joint Task Force (CTJTF).¹¹³ This policy created a rapidly deployable strategic mission capable task force ready to combat national-level threats. The creation of the CTJTF led

¹¹¹ Douglas Overdeer, "Special Operations: Reexamining the Case for a Sixth Service" (Monograph, School for Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 26 May 2004).

¹¹² Hodge Seck, "MARSOC Remains a Growing, Changing Force after 9 Years," *Marine Corps Times*, last modified August 7, 2017, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2015/02/21/marsoc-remains-a-growing-changing-force-after-9-years/>.

¹¹³ JCS, Special Operations Review Group, "Rescue Mission Report."

to the specialized unit that eliminated the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden.¹¹⁴ USSOCOM needs to recognize the gaps in capability for the current conflicts and a recommendation would be to create similar unified groups that have a unified mission focus in the core activities.

The reader now has an in-depth knowledge of where SOF units came from, what caused the creation of USSOCOM, and what issues exist today. This literature review also divided problems that exist today into sections of, and how they relate to interoperability. Lastly, the case studies identify the when and why Army Air Forces designated, transformed into the United States Air Force, the capability gap that created MARSOC, and how the CTJTF was created to respond to national level crisis.

¹¹⁴ Sean Naylor, *Relentless Strike* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2015).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to show that USSOCOM can be greater optimized by unifying as the sixth military service to better address the following issues: domain driven SOSSCCs in a global context of land locked conflicts, a steady increase of national reliance, and problematic dependence on the conventional services. The primary research question is, how can USSOCOM improve optimization to enhance mission accomplishment? The organization of Chapter 3 first explains the methodology of how the author intends to use the sources identified in Chapter 2 to answer the primary and secondary research questions. This chapter also delves into the rationale for the chosen methodology and concludes with the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology. The overall goal of Chapter 3 is to give the reader a holistic view on the upcoming analysis in Chapter 4 that leads to the recommendations and conclusions in Chapter 5. The methodology systematically answers the secondary questions introduced in Chapter 1 by pairing each question with the problematic areas and case studies introduced in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 contains six outlines of how the sources in the literature review answer the six secondary questions. These outlined answers will lead to more in-depth analysis in Chapter 4.

The rationale of the methodology of the research is answering the secondary research questions in order to answer the primary research question. Each secondary research question is analytically broken into smaller pieces to be analyzed by existing

information or studies. This information is then synthesized to form an answer for each research question. The following paragraphs describe each secondary research question answered by the literature review in Chapter 2 along with supporting sources.

Methodology

The first secondary research question is, what is the formational background of USSOCOM and how did that give shape to each Service Component Commands (SOSCC) purpose? The majority of this question was answered in Chapter 2 with a historical overview of SOF units from WWII to present day SOSCC within USSOCOM. Chapter 4 will discuss the formational background of each component and how history detailed in Chapter 2 ties into SOF employment today. This analysis will lead to a recommendation of how understanding the creation of SOF units can lead to more efficient use of SOF units.

The second secondary research question is, “According to the special operations doctrine, what are the purposes, functions, and core activities for each SOF component?” Several core activities overlap in doctrine and history as seen in the historical overview, Table 1, and the Chapter 4 case study analysis of the creation of MARSOC. The synthesis of this information informs an identification of purpose behind SOF units, how they are employed, what is problematic, and leads to recommendations and conclusions in Chapter 5.

The third secondary research question is, “What authorities and directives are USSOCOM entitled to and how are they similar and different to the service commands?” The rationale of pointing out the authorities granted to USSOCOM is to paint a picture to

the reader of the similarities and differences USSOCOM has compared with existing conventional forces. This comparison will be analyzed in Chapter 4 to note the overall hindrances of USSOCOM authorities granted by Congress, which will lead to a recommendation in Chapter 5.

The fourth secondary research question is, “How has the U.S.’s reliance on SOF negatively impacted USSOCOM?” Chapter 2 gives an understanding of how USSOCOM met an explosion of employment since 9/11 and the GWOT. Personnel assigned to USSOCOM has increased from 42,800 in 2001 to over 70,000 in 2018. The growing reliance has led to an increase in budget, core activities, the creation of MARSOC, and a D2D cap to prevent the continued overuse of SOF. The negative impacts of over reliance include difficulties of gear accountability across the SOSCCs,¹¹⁵ the overlapping core activities set with no clear, unified training command,¹¹⁶ and potential for a lower standard of ethical actions in personnel.

The fifth secondary question is, “Are there examples of a military force modifying its interoperability that resulted in an improvement toward mission success?” The two case studies that will be analyzed are the Counter Terrorism Joint Task Force (CTJTF) and the creation of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) case study. The CTJTF was

¹¹⁵ Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DODIG), DODIG-2017-30, “USSOCOM Needs to Improve Management of Sensitive Equipment,” last modified December 12, 2016, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://media.defense.gov/2016/Dec/12/2001714300/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2017-030.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), *Special Operation Forces Reference Manual*, 4th ed. (MacDill AFB, FL : JSOU, June 2015), accessed April 11, 2019, https://www.socom.mil/JSOU/JSOUPublications/2015SOFRefManual_final_cc.pdf.

created in response to the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW and is a great example of SOF unifying around the CT core activity to have an elite force ready for similar emergencies. This unification is parallel to USSOCOM's GWOT response, and Chapter 4 provides a further examination. The creation of the USAF into a military service amid WWII was to develop the capability of air power as described in Chapter 2. The USAF shows how an organization with evolutionary employment, separated into military service or a unified command in order to prioritize their needs to develop. The last secondary research question is, "What changes, if any, should be made to the USSOCOM structure to benefit mission accomplishment?" Chapter 5 discusses the recommendations and conclusions of organizational modification. Factoring in all the problematic topics of finance, disjointed SOSCCs, increased the need for SOF, and case studies of how successful organizations unified in times of crisis, is collectively assessed in the recommendations and conclusions.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Chosen Methods

The method in developing the identified problem areas or secondary research questions is based on experience and open source or unclassified research. This method has a significant weakness in the limitations of identified problems compared to time available for research, and the author's research ability. Other issues of *optimization* within USSOCOM or clarifying documents could exist that the author is unaware of; however, due to the restriction of time, the identified sources limit the encompassing information of this thesis. Another weakness is the scope of problematic topics and case studies combined cover an extensive range of information that restricted the author's

ability to have a deep understanding of each topic in their histories, resolutions, developments, and reasoning behind each one.

The strength of the method lies with the creation of secondary research questions. The secondary research questions ask for a specific answer and allow for interpretation of analysis by the author. This structure allows some freedom for the author to delve across many topic areas that relate to the research questions. Another strength of the methodology is that it allows the author to choose as many problematic areas of optimization within USSOCOM as desired.

Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 3 has defined the rationale of the methodology, the approach in the analysis, and the strength and weaknesses of the methodology. The author has explained the necessary historical knowledge of USSOCOM; doctrine, purposes, functions, training, and core activities for each SOF component; the authorities and directives; the U.S.'s reliance on SOF; and examples of military forces that benefited from the modification of their organization. The following chapter analyzes this subject matter in order to answer the secondary research questions leading to the primary research question on, "how can the Special Operations Service Component Commands (SOSCCs) within USSOCOM, improve optimization to enhance mission accomplishment?"

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter 4 will present findings and analysis of the collective observations in the previous chapters. These collective observations will correlate to the secondary research questions and the subset topics within each. The observations comprises historical articles, publication, unclassified, and open source data. Overall this chapter will represent the findings and results that have been presented through the observations and interpretations by the author.

Chapter 4 is organized to thoroughly answer the secondary questions in attempt to answer the primary question. Each secondary question, a similar theme throughout this paper, will have its section. One by one the author will present the findings and offer an interpretation leading to Chapter 5, the recommendations and conclusions. The conclusions are the answers to the primary research question, and the recommendations are the author's determinations on the solutions to the issues of *optimization* within USSOCOM.

Secondary Research Question #1

The first secondary research question is, "What is the formational background of USSOCOM and how did that give shape to each SOF component's purpose?" Chapter 2 discusses the background of each SOSCC. Each SOF unit from WWII to Vietnam was created to give a single small unit, special operation capability that could not be achieved by conventional forces. The basis of each special operations capability was to conduct

special operations on the sea, air, and land. Pre-ARSOF units from WWII to Vietnam include the Jedburgh's, EUSA Attrition Section, and SF, each played a significant role in land campaigns conducting operations from UW to sabotage to special reconnaissance. Pre-NSW units from WWII to Vietnam include the NDCUs, UDTs, and SEALs each conducted maritime infiltration, maritime FID, and maritime sabotage. Pre-AFSOF units from WWII to Vietnam included the 5th Bombardment Wing, 580th, 581st, and 582nd Air Resupply and Communication Wings, and 4400th CCTS conducted aerial resupply, aerial insertion, and aerial reconnaissance. These historical missions evidence how the premise of each SOSCC was to support special operations ~~expert~~ on the sea, air, and land. These traditional pigeon holes lead to an answer to the primary research question, when modern conflicts and political environments increase, the need for an optimization SOF ~~such as~~ in landlocked countries in the Middle East increases.

Further evidence that each SOSCC creation was for a specific domain is in the *USSOCOM Directive 10-1 Terms of Reference - Roles, Missions, and Functions of Component Commands*, published in 2008, designates each SOSCC explicitly to sea, air, and land. The CDRUSASOC was assigned the functions: "Special Operations Urban Combat (SOUC)", "Close Quarters Battle (CQB)", and to "Serve as USSOCOM Lead Component for Ground Foreign Internal Defense." COMNAVSPECWARCOM was assigned the following functions: "Maritime DA", "Maritime Special Reconnaissance", and "Maritime FID." COMAFSOC was assigned the following functions: "Combat

Weather Support”, “Aerial Special Reconnaissance”, and “Aviation FID.”¹¹⁷ This is clear evidence that even in 2008, USSOCOM focused each SOSCC’s purpose to correlate with its corresponding domain. This is a wasted opportunity to optimize unity of effort by separate domain designated SOSCCs when the majority of USSOCOM deployments are in landlocked countries.

Secondary Research Question #2

The secondary research question is, “According to the special operations doctrine, what are the purposes, functions, and core activities for each SOSCC?” Research and analysis address a couple of points of friction. The first point of friction is what Maj. Overdeer refers to as “double jointed” task forces. The second point of friction is the physically separate SOSCCs. The third point of friction is the overlapping core activities. These three points provide insight on issues of optimization within USSOCOM.

The term double-jointed is defined as the requirement that when SOF units within USSOCOM create a Task Force they must combine and adapt to integrate as a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF.) “The initial establishment of a JSOTF presents significant organizational, operational, and training challenges. These challenges affect the commander and joint special operations task force (CDRJSOTF) ability to rapidly

¹¹⁷ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), USSOCOM Directive No. 10.1, *U.S. Special Operations Command Terms of Reference – Roles, Missions and Functions of Component Commands* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM, August 2008), accessed October 10, 2018, <https://publicintelligence.net/ussocom-tor/>.

fuse a diverse group of key personnel, with varying degrees of understanding and experience in joint SO, into a functioning JSOTF.”¹¹⁸

Then the organizational, operational, and training challenges are recreated in a large scale combat operation when the JSOTF would then further need to combine and adapt with the conventional services under a JTFC as a Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC.) This double-jointed effort is a point of friction due to the separate nature of USSOCOM’s SOSCCs.¹¹⁹

The second point of friction is each SOSCC HQ is located across the country. USASOC is located in Fort Bragg, NC. MARSOC is located in Camp Lejeune, NC. AFSOC is located in Hurlburt Field, FL. NAVSPECWARCOM is located in Coronado, CA.¹²⁰ These separate locations are a physical barrier of distance for the different SOSCCs to enhance interoperability.

It is essential for the U.S. military to continue to train for regular and irregular warfare. All SOSCCs have heavily fought COIN and FID operations for the past 18 years with the majority of SOF deployments taking place in the Middle East.¹²¹ There also needs to be a continuation of SOF and CF integration to prepare for a potential large scale

¹¹⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication 3-05.1, *Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007), accessed May 1, 2019, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp3_05_01.pdf.

¹¹⁹ JCS, JP 3-05.

¹²⁰ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Office of Communication, *2019 Fact Book* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM, 2019), accessed March 31, 2019, <https://www.socom.mil/FactBook/2019FactBook.pdf>.

¹²¹ USSOCOM, USSOCOM Directive No. 10.1.

combat operation. The double-jointed efforts provide two barriers to effective communication and mission accomplishment. A simple question would be to ask, does this current structure requiring two levels of integration the most we can optimize USSOCOM? It does not enhance interoperability and Chapter 5 will suggest how this friction point can be smoothed.

The second point of friction is the overlapping core activities sets. Table 2 depicts that all SOF components are capable of conducting or supporting all core activities. Some of those core activities are unique and are reliant on one SOF element. Some of those unique core activities would include UW is reliant on SF, combat diving and maritime operations are reliant on NSW, and terminal control and aerial SR is reliant on AFSOC.¹²² The core activities that have common primacy for USASOC, NAVSOC, MARSOC, and AFSOF are DA, SR, FID, CT, and SFA. With 55 percent of SOF deployed to the Middle East in 2017.¹²³ many SOF units from different SOSCCs were, are, and will continue to fight in the same country, against the same enemy, and likely around the same time. How similarly do SOF units train for such similar operations? How often do different SOF units train together? How well does each SOF unit know the capabilities and limitations of other SOF units?

¹²² USSOCOM, USSOCOM Directive No. 10.1.

¹²³ U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Interview by U.S. Congress, *C-SPAN*, May 4, 2017, Video, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?427710-1/hearing-focuses-us-special-operations#&start=1894>.

Table 2. USSOCOM Core Activities

USSOCOM Activity	USASOC	NAVSOC	AFSOC	MARSOC
Direction Action (DA)	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Special Reconnaissance (SR)	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction	Secondary	Support	Support	Support
Counterterrorism	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Unconventional Warfare	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Foreign Internal Defense	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Security Force Assistance	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Hostage Rescue and Recovery	Support	Support	Support	Support
Counterinsurgency	Support	Support	Support	Support
Foreign Humanity Assistance	Support	Support	Support	Support
Military Information Support Operations (MISO)	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Civil Affairs Operations (CAO)	Primary	Support	Support	Support
Other Activities	Support	Support	Support	Support

Source: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations” (Lecture, P940: SOF Preparatory Course, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Lecture, August 2018).

In regards to training, there are many examples of joint SOF training. At the joint level, Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is a

JSOC is a sub-unified command of USSOCOM. JSOC is charged to study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop joint special operations tactics. JSOC has assigned and attached subordinate units and may deploy to support the GCC’s training, exercises, activities, and operations.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ JCS, JP 3-05.

Another example, according to USSOCOM Directive 10-1 published in 2008, USASOC will develop and recommend doctrine in Ground FID, Special Operations Urban Combat (SOUC), and Close Quarters Battle (CQB.)¹²⁵

The doctrines for FID, SOUC, and CQB are essential to DA, SR, FID, CT, and SFA; A third source of consolidated training is within the USSOCOM special staff, Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Joint Collective Training cell and Education Training cell.¹²⁶

Shared doctrine does not bring about shared capability. Each SOF community has four separate training commands in different locations across the nation and is at the constraints of the developed curriculum, facilities, budgets, traveling distances, weather, instructors, scenarios, and time allocated to a core activity or tactical training. With SOF alpha cultures, one SEAL platoon for example will compete to become better than another and two side by side platoon will have different capabilities by the end of pre-deployment training. Thus, it is fair to say that each SOSCC's SOF units differ in some capability, and each SOSCC unit deploys at a different level of readiness to theaters of war with different skills sets and standards on how to conduct DA, SR, CT, FID, and SFA.

How well does each SOF component know each other? More specifically how well does each SOSCC small unit understand the capabilities and limitations of each other? It is a tough question to analyze without a broad survey or an extensive interview

¹²⁵ USSOCOM, USSOCOM Directive No. 10.1.

¹²⁶ JSOU, *Special Operations Force Reference Manual*.

process. It would be a fair assumption that the knowledge of one SOF individual is different from another and varies with time, rank, and position within USSOCOM. It is important to acknowledge if multiple different SOSCC small units are maneuvering in a battlefield, that at a minimum it would be important that the ground force commander (GFC) has an in-depth understanding of the limitations and capabilities of each SOSCC in order to effectively shoot, move, and communicate in harmony.

It is clear that all GFCs do not have an in-depth knowledge of each SOSCC if SOF field grade officers at the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas receive a capabilities brief of each SOSCC.¹²⁷ Officers with approximately 10 years of experience in the military and SOF operations should have a working knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of each SOSCC especially when a majority of SOF deploy to the Middle East. This gap in knowledge does not necessarily stop missions from being conducted but is an issue that if fixed would enhance the optimization of USSOCOM. Chapter 5 further discusses how this unfamiliarity of SOSCCs could be fixed.

Secondary Research Question #3

The third secondary question is, “What authorities and directives are USSOCOM entitled to and how are they similar and different to the service commands?” This section will compare and contrast the list of Title 10 authorities granted to USSOCOM and the conventional service commands within the U.S. Code (USC.) The comparison is to

¹²⁷ CGSC, “C310: Joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) Roles, Capabilities, Limitations and Operational Considerations.”

understand how similar USSOCOM is to the other services and what the impact of these differences is. The second part will discuss the financial authorities and differences of MFP-11 and MFP-2. The third part of this section will show how USSOCOM's authorities have needed to grow add on since its inception. The fourth part will discuss how separate SOSCCs have led to misuse in millions of dollars of gear. The author will discuss these aspects of authorities with the perspective of how they can be an issue to the optimization within USSOCOM.

USSOCOM under Title 10 is entitled to the following authorities: (1) Develop special operations strategy, doctrine, and tactics; (2) exercise authority, direction, and control over special operations expenditures; (3) train assigned forces; (4) conduct specialized courses of instruction, validate requirements, and establish requirement priorities; (5) ensure interoperability of equipment and forces; (6) formulate and submit intelligence support requirements; (7) monitor Special Operations officers' promotions, assignments, retention, training, and professional military education; (8) ensure Special Operations Forces' combat readiness and monitor Special Operations Forces' preparedness to carry out assigned core activities; (9) develop, and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, materiel, supplies and services.¹²⁸

The conventional forces are granted the following authorities: The Services under Title 10 are entitled to the following authorities: (1) recruiting, organizing, supplying, and

¹²⁸ U.S. Congress, House, Office of the Law Revision Counsel, United States Code, 10 USC 167: Unified Combatant Command for Special Operations Forces, accessed April 1, 2019, <http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section167&num=0&edition=prelim>.

equipping (including research and development); (2) training, servicing, mobilizing, demobilizing, and administering (including the morale and welfare of personnel); (3) maintaining, construction, outfitting, and repair of military equipment; (4) the construction, maintenance, and repair of buildings, structures, and utilities; (5) and the acquisition of real property and interests in real property necessary to carry out the responsibilities specified in this section.¹²⁹

The differences of the listed authorities are few and include recruiting and acquisition of property. This comparison is a surface level comparison of authorities and shows only some of the more significant differences between USSOCOM from the separate Services. There is a more profound acknowledgment of discrepancies of authorities alluded to by the former USSOCOM Commander General Raymond Thomas (Army.) In 2018, he stated that the command is currently “pursuing authorities and resources to enhance UW operations... We do not have all the authorities the services have... there are authorities that are inherent to the services that we are looking to gain over time.”¹³⁰ Those authorities specifically were not elaborated in detail, but some will be discussed below.

USSOCOM recruiting is bound to the services and creates an unnecessary reliance. Gen. Thomas communicated that USASOC is suffering from a recruitment

¹²⁹ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, “United States Code,” accessed April 1, 2019, <http://uscode.house.gov/browse/&edition=prelim>.

¹³⁰ USSOCOM, Interview by U.S. Congress.

struggle due to the downsizing of the Army.¹³¹ Recruiting is a problem in an overlapping of the needs for special operations with the needs of the conventional services. The GWOT created a need for SOF personnel, causing USSOCOM to nearly double from 2001 to 2019. Due to the high dropout rate of SOF selection courses, many of the dropout candidates then report to the conventional services which may cause them to go over the authorized manning.

There also is a threat to potential recruits that if they do not make a SOSCC selection course, they face the consequences of working on a ship in the Navy or in a tent in the Army. This system could deter valuable candidates from screening due to the several consequences of signing to a military job that is not within their interests. Also true, if USSOCOM is allowing fewer candidates into selection courses this can cause a lack of recruiting to the conventional services from the high dropout rates. Either way, reliance on each other in any fashion can be problematic in times of need for all parties involved.

There is a history of USSOCOM needing to add to its authorities over the years. It would appear the service-like authorities of the conventional services has not been enough and continues to be refuted. As discussed in Chapter 2, MFP-11 was created in 1987 with the creation of USSOCOM. MFP-11 was included in the conventional services budgets and no money was allocated to the TSOCs. In 1989, the control of MFP-11 went from the conventional services to USSOCOM.¹³² Under General Lindsay NSW, AFSOC,

¹³¹ Office of the Law Revision Counsel, “United States Code.”

¹³² John Peters, Elvira Loreda, Karlyn Stanley, Matthew Boyer, William Welser IV, and Thomas Szayna, *Authorities and Options for Funding USSOCOM*

PSYOPS, and CA were formed under USSOCOM. In 2006, MARSOC was also added to USSOCOM. In 2004 USSOCOM was given Coordinating Authority for CVEO, and in 2017 given Coordinating Authority for CWMD. In the 2019 USSOCOM posture statement General Thomas writes, “USSOCOM values its acquisition authority and welcomes recent legislative acquisition reforms such as expanded authority under Section 2371b and Section 803 Middle Tier Acquisition Authority.”¹³³ These changes in history show that USSOCOM is a growing force, and its growth in authorities will continue to close the conventional services in some ways and surpass them in other ways. USSOCOM will continue to reach out to Congress or the Senate for more service like authorities unless USSOCOM is made into a service.

MFP-11 funds are only for “SOF-peculiar” funds where there is no service common equivalent.¹³⁴ SOF peculiar, in essence, means anything related to SOF operations, SOF specific equipment, SOF research and development, and SOF Overseas Contingency Operations.¹³⁵ That, in turn, means that “service common” items are paid for by the service departments in the General Purposes line of money, MFP-2. These definitions are vague and can lead to the service departments and USSOCOM paying for

Operations (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, June 3, 2014), accessed April 20, 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR360.html.

¹³³ U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General Raymond A. Thomas*.

¹³⁴ Jonathan Duncan, “The Dilemma for USSOCOM: Transitioning SOF-Peculiar to Service-Common” (Master’s Thesis, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, 2012), 1.

¹³⁵ Peters et al., *Authorities and Options for Funding USSOCOM Operations*.

items they should not be paying for, which also can lead to disputes and friction points between the two. These disputes are a problem for mission readiness, mission accomplishment, and other purposes for the budget allocation.

In 2014, the RAND Corporation investigated the identified disputes between USSOCOM and the GCCs. Typically when an unforeseen situation arises USSOCOM responds to a contingency using MFP-11 OCO dollars. However, when there is an unfunded requirement within a GCC, USSOCOM requests funding through the GCC's Combatant Command Support Agent (CCSA.) The CCSA's role is to discuss with the TSOCs from where the funding should come. The problem is the GCC's CCSA and USSOCOM may not agree where the requirement gets allocated funds. This bias decision had led to disputes while potentially international terrorists are unmolested.¹³⁶ In 2017, the DOD released Directive 5100.03 allowing USSOCOM to have a CCSA in each GCC to give administrative and logistic support.¹³⁷ The creation of a USSOCOM CCSA will not settle all future disputes, because pulling unfunded requirements from USSOCOM's portion of MFP-2 will still come out of the conventional service's budget when those unfunded requirements are calculated for next year's budget.¹³⁸

The authorities and budget constraints are a limiting factor to USSOCOM. Those factors are inherently passed down to the individual SOSCCs. Each who must also compete for MFP-11 and must also coordinate between each other on the budget for SOF

¹³⁶ Peters et al., *Authorities and Options for Funding USSOCOM Operations*.

¹³⁷ Deputy SecDef, DoDD 5100.03, 1-8.

¹³⁸ Peters et al., *Authorities and Options for Funding USSOCOM Operations*.

peculiar equipment. It has been a notable problem with the lack of communication between SOSCCs in matters of sharing equipment. In 2016, the Inspector General of the DOD found that seven different USSOCOM locations had \$615.49 million of equipment missing from inventories.¹³⁹ In 2018, the Inspector General of the DOD found that SOSCCs did not inventory items that exceeded their allocation of SOF Peculiar items. These items amounted to \$26.3 million and were also unable to be redistributed to other SOSCCs that were delinquent in their allocation.¹⁴⁰ This is a clear breakdown in communication across the SOSCCs, and this also enlightens that SOSCCs conduct the same core activities, at the same time, in the same locations, with the same equipment, but do not see a need to conduct the same training or ensure proper allocation of SOF equipment. This is an issue that ARSOF and NSW, for example, both receive the same night vision devices when maritime missions may require different capabilities of night vision.

The authorities given to USSOCOM are vast and yet still lacking in some matters as Gen. Thomas suggests. They are incredibly similar to the other services, but USSOCOM is still reliant on all recruits coming from the conventional services. The authorities to MFP-11 can be misleading that USSOCOM has a budget, but clearly, they still pull additional funds from the other services, and GCCs and money can cause a rift

¹³⁹ DODIG, DODIG-2017-030.

¹⁴⁰ Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DODIG), DODIG-2018-100, “U.S. Special Operations Command’s Management of Excess Equipment,” last modified March 29, 2018, accessed January 31, 2019, <https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/Article/1481906/us-special-operations-commands-management-of-excess-equipment/>.

in the efforts for interoperability. As those funds trickle down to the SOSCCs that also must justify their budgets, issues arise in gear accountability divulging an incoherent level of communication across SOSCCs that has resulted in millions of dollars wasted.

Secondary Research Question #4

The fourth secondary research question is, “How has the U.S.’s reliance on SOF negatively impacted USSOCOM?” The budget’s growth of USSOCOM has continuously grown and will continue in FY20.¹⁴¹ The reliance has created a massive increase in the number of personnel that links to the increased budget and difficulty maintaining communication amongst all SOF service members. The increased reliance has also created more responsibility with the acceptance of CWMD mission. This need for SOF since 2001 created overuse of SOF personnel and instituted D2D in 2011 to ensure members were not unfairly taken away from their families for a destabilizing amount of time. Lastly, the U.S. reliance has potentially had a negative result on and off the battlefield in terms of the ethical choices of SOF personnel. This has led to a congressional review of the ethical training within USSOCOM in 2018.

Figure 1 depicts the growth of the budget from \$2.3 billion in FY01 to \$10.4 billion in FY13. The FY18 budget is \$12.3 billion,¹⁴² and in FY 20 the budget request is

¹⁴¹ U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, last modified March 28, 2019), accessed April 28, 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS21048.pdf>.

¹⁴² U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), “FY2013 Budget Highlights (USSOCOM),” Share Slide, last modified November 8, 2018, accessed April 8, 2019,

for \$13.8 billion.¹⁴³ The budget has nearly multiplied itself 6 times in 18 years. Since 2012, the budget has risen but brings a concern to how much money would be required if another significant commitment to combat operations were to initiate again like in Afghanistan and Iraq. Will the budget stabilize and how much SOF will be needed?

The personnel growth correlates with the budget. As more personnel are within USSOCOM, more money is needed for salaries, training, and equipping. In 2001 there were 4.9K SOF deployed at any given moment, and in 2013 there were 11.5K SOF deployed at any given time. In 2018, there were 8,300 SOF deployed across 90 countries. Even though deployed forces have gone down in recent years the number of personnel in total within USSOCOM continues to rise. In 2001, the authorized military positions were 42,800, in 2014 it was 62,800,¹⁴⁴ and projected into 2020, personnel is approximately 73,000.¹⁴⁵ There was a need for SOF to fight the majority of the U.S.'s battles and the budget and personnel numbers increased violently. There does not seem to be an end in sight of potential growth, and if another substantial conflict breaks out, will the U.S. increase their reliance on SOF? A contributing factor could be because multiple SOSCCs that conduct the same core activities but with no unified training regimen are bound to

<https://www.slideshare.net/ElizabethMixson/fy19-socom-budget-highlights-mastering-the-multidomain-battlefield>.

¹⁴³ CRS, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*.

¹⁴⁴ GAO, GAO 15-571.

¹⁴⁵ CRS, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*.

make mistakes and learn slower from those mistakes. Those mistakes may also be hard to communicate across the SOSCCs lessons learned in large and small matters. To make matters more complicated, MARSOC was created and established within USSOCOM in 2006, adding another separate SOSCC to the fight in the Middle East.¹⁴⁶ Further analysis of MARSOC's creation and employment will be at the end of this section.

USSOCOM had shifted the responsibility of CWMD from the FCC Strategic Command (STRATCOM) to USSOCOM in 2017.¹⁴⁷ This additional responsibility is a huge task that involves Chemical, Biological, Radiology, and Nuclear (CBRN) ambitions of aggressive nation states, non-state actors, and terrorist organizations. Not only is the size and scope of this core activity large and complex, but it is also vitally critical to the prevention of mass atrocities. USSOCOM already has several core activities emplaced with a deployed posture in over 90 countries. How much additional responsibility for USSOCOM is the tipping point and what responsibilities could suffer due to this addition?

A clear sign of a negative impact on over-reliance is the implementation of D2D. All SOF forces are constrained to maintain a 2:1 ratio of dwell time at home to deployed time. The ratio means that for every one day a member is deployed they must be at home

¹⁴⁶ Marine Forces Special Operations Command, "Heritage."

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, *Reviewing Department of Defense Strategy, Policy, and Programs for Countering Weapons of 13 Mass Destruction (CWMD) for Fiscal Year 2019* (Washington, DC, March 22, 2018), accessed March 19, 2019, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS26/20180322/108018/HHRG-115-AS26-Wstate-OxfordV-20180322.pdf>.

for two days. As of 2011, the DOD established a 2:1 policy in light of the increase in suicides, divorce rates, and PTSD.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, even if U.S. soldiers need more time off to sustain a force, terrorist organizations remain unmolested. That requires USSOCOM to create more forces.

Case Study: MARSOC

In 1983, the military services were tasked by the SECDEF to develop special operations capabilities. General Kelley, Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), responded that the Marine Corps would not create a special operations unit, and the capabilities across the Marines would stay the same. In 1987, a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Special Operations Capable (SOC) concept was created. It mandated that MAGTF be able to conduct special operations that tie with amphibious operations. The Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) SOC was created to conduct amphibious operations and specialized missions of limited scope and duration only when authorized by National Command Authorities in extremis.¹⁴⁹

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Marine Corps 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade was reactivated. Shortly after, then CMC, General James Jones agreed with USSOCOM to create a board that would discuss the mission and functions that would support SOF. Thus, in 2003, the Marine Corps Special Operations Command

¹⁴⁸ Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Memo, Subj: Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) Deployment-to-Dwell, Mobilization-to-Dwell Policy Revision.

¹⁴⁹ Marine Forces Special Operations Command, "Heritage."

(MCSOCOM) Detachment 1 was created. That same year, Detachment 1 supported Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in conjunction with NSW Group One. A study conducted at JSOU found that Detachment 1 was sufficient to conduct the core activities of special operations, and “as the ongoing Global War on Terrorism drew more and more heavily on special operations units, it was decided to formally incorporate a Marine Special Operations Force element into SOCOM to ensure success in the long war ahead.”¹⁵⁰

On February 24, 2006, MARSOC was the fourth SOSCC within USSOCOM. MARSOC saw success in Al-Anbar Province, Iraq in 2006 during the Anbar Awakening, conducting several CT and DA operations, and breaking the Al Qaeda held territories in the most dangerous province of Iraq.¹⁵¹

This case study is to illustrate that SOF conducts the same core activities, sometimes at the same time, in the same locations (Detachment 1 was attached to NSW). The problem arises when the call for more forces to assure D2D of the individual SOF member is compensated for by training amongst the SOSCCs. Was the need to protect the SOF from suicide, divorce, and depression prioritized over the SOF truth of “SOF cannot be massed produced?”¹⁵²

Perhaps the unintended consequences are a result of the 2018 ethics review. “In the FY2019 National Defense, Authorization Act (P.L. 115-232) suggest a growing

¹⁵⁰ Marine Forces Special Operations Command, “Heritage.”

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² U.S. Special Operations Command, “SOF Truths,” accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.socom.mil/about/sof-truths>.

congressional concern with misconduct, ethics, and professionalism” and “The Secretary of Defense shall conduct a comprehensive review of the ethics programs and professionalism programs of the United States Special Operations Command.”¹⁵³ This is in light of a handful of SOF members convicted of illegal and unethical acts that included murder, smuggling, drugs, rape, domestic battery, suicide, and war crimes.¹⁵⁴ After 18 years of consistent deployments into combat zones, where deployments have stretched into 15 months, it is foreseeable that a few SOF personnel cross the ethical lines of conduct in war and while at home. What can we expect of SOF if other substantial conflicts emerge? If the current rate of SOF deployments increased, will there be an increase in criminal acts? This does not lead to better cohesion across the SOSCCs and does not enhance interoperability within USSOCOM. Chapter 5 will discuss potential solutions.

This section discussed the U.S.’s over-reliance on SOF and the negative impacts. Over-reliance is shown through the numbers of personnel and budget. Personnel has nearly doubled, and the budget has grown six-fold. Issues trace back on the need for more personnel as SOF is unable to stomp out the conflicts in the Middle East permanently and additional forces such as MARSOC are needed to rest the ones that have fought for years, deploying multiple times overseas. The execution is exacerbated when the training of all

¹⁵³ CRS, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*.

¹⁵⁴ Meghann Meyers, “Spec Ops in Trouble: Mired in Scandal and under Pentagon Review, What Will It Take to Clean House?” *Military Times*, March 13, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/03/13/spec-ops-in-trouble-mired-in-scandal-and-under-pentagon-review-what-will-it-take-to-clean-house/>.

the units is not the same, and communication across all the units is not understood. This has currently led to Congress “questioning the future role of USSOCOM and U.S. SOF.”¹⁵⁵

Secondary Research Question #5

The fifth secondary question is, “Are there examples of a military force modifying its interoperability that resulted in an improvement toward mission success?” This question directs the issues that are outlined in the above secondary questions and points them towards a solution through organizational change. This secondary question will look at organizations with similar situations to USSOCOM and show how they made organizational changes to enhance their interoperability to improve mission accomplishment. The two case studies discussed are the creation of the CTJTF, and the creation of the USAF.

Case Study: Counter Terrorism Joint Task Force

To quickly recap what was stated in Chapter 2, Operation EAGLE CLAW’s failure was the result of the creation of the CTJTF. The operation called upon all services of the military to conduct an ad hoc counter terrorist and hostage rescue mission of 53 Americans in Tehran, Iran. The mission aborted before it reached the target, because one of the helicopters ran into a C-130, killing eight members of the operation. This failure

¹⁵⁵ CRS, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*.

was a mockery to the United States, and the failure to rescue the hostages questioned America's strength to the world.

Eagle Claw had been a pickup game, with each service claiming a role: the Army provided the ground rescue force; the Air Force contributed MC-130 Combat Talon transports, AC-130 Spectre gunships; the Navy proffered an aircraft carrier from which the eight Navy RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters launched; the Marine Corps, keen not to be excluded, provided the pilots. These forces were not used to working together.¹⁵⁶

Within the same year, Admiral Holloway III led the recommendation that created the CTJTF as an agency under the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹⁵⁷ The creation of the CTJTF is an example of how the military had a problem with conducting on the spot operations of national importance. The Holloway Commission recognized a gap in capabilities of the military and created a joint force that would train and prepare for national emergencies. Before CTJTF special operations existed, the required aviation and support units that trained for special operations also did not exist. This organization was a joint creation for a specified task of strategic importance. The CTJTF went on to be one of the most lethal units on earth, executing covert missions against the most wanted people in the world.

SEAL Team Six is widely known as the unit that killed Osama Bin Laden. The man who started the GWOT as the leader of Al-Qaeda was America's most wanted man for over a decade. Team Six had several weeks to train for the execution of the raid on Osama's compound in Pakistan and had prepared for a decade.¹⁵⁸ On May 2, 2011,

¹⁵⁶ Naylor, *Relentless Strike*, 4.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

around 1 a.m., 23 Navy SEALs raided Bin Laden's compound located in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The raid lasted approximately 40 minutes and killed 5 people within the compound, including Bin Laden, with no American injuries.¹⁵⁹ It was later revealed that Bin Laden was plotting an assassination attempt on President Barack Obama.¹⁶⁰ SEAL Team Six's elimination of Osama Bin Laden is the result of the creation of the CTJTF that focused and mastered the craft of ad hoc high priority counter-terrorist missions to eliminate the leader of one of the world's worst terrorist organizations.

This is similar to USSOCOM because the SOSCCs conduct the same core activities separately. When a crisis arises, they create an ad hoc organization where multiple SOSCC unite to execute the core activities. That organization is the JSOTF. Just as the individual service based units found it challenging to come together to execute Operation EAGLE CLAW, the different service based SOF units are conducting DA, SR, FID, SFA, and CT in the enduring Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR.) There is room for USSOCOM to become more of a joint force like the CTJTF in the way they train and prepare for DA, SR, FID, SFA, and CT.

¹⁵⁹ History, "Osama Bin Laden Killed by U.S. Forces," last modified August 29, 2011, accessed March 14, 2019, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/osama-bin-laden-killed-by-u-s-forces>.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Case Study: The Creation of the U.S. Air Force

At the end of WWII, dropping of nuclear bombs was dramatic, and sometimes it is said a revolutionary change emerged in strategic warfare. The U.S. was fearful of communist expansion from the Soviet Union, and its military leaders believed in the concept of strategic bombing. Strategic bombing was solidified by the National Security Act of 1947, creating an independent Air Force from the AAF.¹⁶¹

The surprising need for aviation started in WWI when the U.S. only had an Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps that consisted of 250 airplanes in an attempt to meet France's request to provide 4,500 airplanes. That failure to meet the wartime needs evolved into an Air Corps that fell under the Army. A catalyst for change, Brigadier General William Mitchell, USAF, argued for a separate aviation service that had the autonomy to,

conduct strategic or long-range bombing to destroy an enemy's industry and war-making potential... his actions gained political support for the Air Corps' 'strategic' bombing doctrine using heavily armed long-range aircraft to attack an adversary war-making capacity and national will.¹⁶²

The Air Corps saw a significant advance in military responsibility after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack that launched the U.S. into WWII was complimented with significant advancements to aviation technology. The Chief of the Air Corps assumed the role of Commanding General of the Army Air Forces in 1941, essentially becoming an equal on the Chiefs of Staff. During the duration of WWII, the AAF expanded from

¹⁶¹ Overdeer, "Special Operations: Reexamining the Case for a Sixth Service," 42.

¹⁶² Ibid.

2,400 airplanes to 80,000 airplanes at its peak. The dropping of atomic bombs demonstrated the power of aviation and the National Security Act of 1947 created the United States Air Force as we know it today.¹⁶³

This case study is similar to USSOCOM because as the political, global, and technological context changed, so too did the way the U.S. fights. For the Air Force, the political environment changed from a total war of bombing a nation's war-making abilities to global strike with nuclear capabilities needed during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. The global context after WWII was the desire to impact other belligerent nations without sacrificing American lives. The Air Force provided the capability to safely drop bombs in support of national and allies' interests without the commitment of forces on the ground. The technological context was the devastating power of the nuclear bomb and ballistic missile systems to accomplish significant desired effects while saving countless lives.¹⁶⁴ These contexts were the criteria that created the Air Force today.

USSOCOM has gone through similar political, global, and technological context changes. The political context shifted after 9/11, creating the GWOT. Counterterrorism and all its forms required a heavy reliance on SOF to spread throughout several countries. A task that is seen needed to be commanded by USSOCOM makes the need for separated SOSCCs questionable for the benefit of mission accomplishment. The global context ties into political and technological developments. The global development since 9/11 of the United Nations (UN) to combat terrorism, married with U.S. interests to avoid military

¹⁶³ Overdeer, "Special Operations: Reexamining the Case for a Sixth Service," 42.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

deaths has made SOF an appropriate answer. The global interconnectivity has made the surgical strike of SOF a possibility and appealing to popular opinion. The technology context in the GWOT has given the U.S. a dominant upper hand in targeting and eliminating terrorists.¹⁶⁵ These contexts together have changed the way America fights in conflict.

The conditions before the creation of the Air Forces are parallel to USSOCOM's conditions for the past 18 years. The reliance and capability of SOF are critical to the mission of the U.S. The small unit, able to prevent global catastrophe align with political and popular interests. The technological advances give the possibility to execute core activities within USSOCOM.

Conclusion

The collective observations presents several issues that affect optimization within USSOCOM. One by one the secondary research questions are answered with a lens focused on the primary research question. The secondary research questions demonstrated that the historical formation of SOF was to have special operation units aligned to specific domains of sea, air, and land. The historical mission of pre-SOSCC units evidences this and doctrine specifies domains to specific SOF units. Confusion is the result when all SOSCCs are given primacy of DA, SR, FID, SFA, and CT. The four separate SOSCC training command locations due not optimize unity of effort.

¹⁶⁵ Overdeer, "Special Operations: Reexamining the Case for a Sixth Service," 42.

Comparing the authorities of USSOCOM and the conventional services, we see little difference in the forefront authorities, except in USSOCOM's limited ability to recruit. Delving into the nuance of congressional authorities, General Thomas alludes to USSOCOM's requests for more service-like responsibilities. The over-reliance of SOF has authorized an enormous growth from 42,800 in 2001 to a projected 73,000 personnel in 2020. In 2001, there were 4.9K SOF members deployed, and in 2018 there were 8,300 SOF member deployed at any given time. D2D recognized the negative impacts of continuous deployment and instituted a 2:1 dwell to deployment ratio. As the conflicts in the Middle East continued, all SOSCCs were contributing to the fight. USSOCOM saw a need for more SOF, and in 2006 MARSOC was created and joined the fight. This is evidence that SOSCCs do not need to be secluded to their appropriate domain and if all SOSCCs are going to contribute to the same fight, they should train how to fight the same way. The separate SOSCCs may cause a lack of communication across and is evidenced by the lack of accountability and sharing of needed special operations equipment. These negative impacts and enduring conflicts are a significant contributor to the 2018 ethical overview of USSOCOM mandated by Congress.

Two organizations that had organizational issues and made changes to improve mission success are the two case studies of the CTJTF and the Air Force. The CTJTF was created after the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW, to make a joint military organization that could quickly respond to strategically important crises. This is parallel to USSOCOM where each SOSCC forcibly integrates every time a JSOTF establishes, or on deployment when lives are at risk. The Air Force was created into a separate service

after WWII, when technology allowed for strategic bombing, the political environment was to prevent American losses, and the global context was to build power amid the Cold War. This case study also parallels USSOCOM as technology made surgical strikes possible, the political environment is still to prevent American losses, and the global context is the Global War on Terrorism.

Chapter 4 is meant to give the reader all the issues found regarding optimizing USSOCOM. The case studies are to analyze organizations that also experienced similar issues and what actions were taken to fix the issues. Chapter 5 will discuss a synthesis of the issues, make conclusions, and offer recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations to the primary research question, “How can the Special Operations Service Component Commands (SOSCCs) within USSOCOM improve optimization to enhance mission accomplishment?” First, this chapter will briefly restate the facts presented in Chapter 4. Then, the facts will be consolidated into conclusions identifying optimization issues. Finally, the conclusions will lead to recommendations, which attempt to counteract the issues of optimization within USSOCOM. Each recommendation includes a recommendation consideration that will contrast the negative aspects of the proposed recommendations.

The Facts

In Chapter 4, the author analyzed research to establish facts of optimization within USSOCOM. The secondary research questions separate the facts into groups. The following paragraphs restate the frictions in the secondary research questions order.

The historical formational background of the SOSCCs shows that each SOSCC was created to conduct special operations in earth domains of sea, air, and land. USSOCOM upheld this view in 2008 with the publication of the USSOCOM Terms of Reference - Roles, Missions, and Functions of Component Commands. The policy divides the primary responsibilities of SOSCCs to earth domains. This division is

significant to understanding how SOSCCs function and to comparing this view with the long term conflicts in the Middle East.

The next set of facts come from the analysis of the SOF doctrine and legal policy. The core activities of DA, SR, FID, SFA, and CT are all common primary core activities across the SOSCCs. This commonality is paired with the fact that there are four separate SOSCC training commands. The last fact pulled from the doctrinal analysis examines the friction point of SOF overcoming a double jointed effort in establishing a JSOTF and then a JFSOCC when falling under a JTF.

The declaration of the GWOT created an explosion of employment for SOF, and specific issues emerge from the explosive aftermath. The following facts testify to the growing reliance of the U.S. on USSOCOM. The personnel in USSOCOM increased from 42,800 personnel in 2001 to a requested 73,000 personnel in 2020. Likewise, the budget increased from \$2.3 billion in 2001 to the requested \$13.8 billion in 2020. The D2D ratio was created to mandate operational rest to service members due to the detrimental effect of prolonged deployments. MARSOC was added as a SOSCC under USSOCOM in 2006 to add more SOF bodies to deploy. USSOCOM added CWMD to the list of core activities.

The last set of facts deal with case studies of organizations that faced a similar situation to USSOCOM and found solutions. For instances, the CTJTF was a consolidated SOF force created to solve the problem of conducting ad hoc operations of strategic importance. Another example is the USAF that became an independent military service due to the changes of political, technological, and global contexts of the time that

created a heavy reliance on the Air Force. USSOCOM shares circumstances with the CTJTF and the USAF with the advent of the GWOT. The recommendations will reflect USSOCOM's solutions to their solutions.

Conclusions

The first conclusion is that USSOCOM is fighting to maintain true to its origins of domain driven SOSCCs while not fully adapting to the context of the current environment in land-locked combat environments. It is clear USSOCOM cannot fight all the landlocked conflicts with only USASOC. All of the SOSCCs have conducted special operations in the Middle East. It should be asked how much is lost on the joint battlefield when due the separate SOSCCs? It should also be asked what happens if there is a conflict that requires maritime special operations, NSW, and MARSOC are unable to support land operations?

The second conclusion notes that USSOCOM is heavily relied upon by the U.S. with no stabilization of manning, budget, or responsibility in sight. The nature of the GWOT is an evolution in military employment, and as of 2018 USSOCOM is spread to 90 countries at all times. Where will the forces come from when another substantial conflict emerges?

The third conclusion argues that a significant problem with optimization in USSOCOM is the separate SOSCCs. The separation inhibits communication as seen with the missing and unaccounted for special operations gear. It creates opposing cultures as seen with the disputes of authorities and money between the conventional services,

GCCs, and USSOCOM. All these inhibiting frictions do not enhance mission accomplishment in the Middle East or other conflicts in the world.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to make USSOCOM the seventh military service. All separate SOSCCs would become one Special Operations Component (SOC). Within the SOC there would be three branches: Operators, Aviation, and Maritime. The Operators would be SOF members that can conduct core activities on the sea, air, and land. The Aviation and Maritime SOF members would be pilots for fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, boats, and submersibles. The enablers such as PSYOPS, CA, SOWT that are organic to USSOCOM and are critical to several core activities need to easily integrate with the Operators. Enablers are not a SO only mission set, they would need to be attached from the conventional services. This design would solve several identified problems. The increase in personnel problem would decrease due to the need for only one admin and a headquarters element. This decrease in personnel would result in a decrease in the amount of money spent on salaries, uniforms, and equipment. The SOC would consolidate training of core activities amongst the SOC components and consolidating training would save money on training facilities and garrison locations. SOF units like NSW and MARSOC would not need to train to conduct ground FID and maritime FID; likewise, AFSOF would not need to train to conduct ground FID and aviation FID. The operators can focus on ground FID while the Aviation and Maritime components can focus on their aviation and maritime FID activities. As a result, the double-jointed problem disappears, and only SOTFs exist. Tensions between USSOCOM, the

conventional services, and the GCCs would be relieved by unifying MFP-11 and MFP-2 into one USSOCOM line of money. USSOCOM's reliance on conventional services recruiting numbers would also be relieved as recruits are permitted at the needs of only USSOCOM. Lastly, this method enhances unified action within USSOCOM and gives potential to increase mission accomplishment.

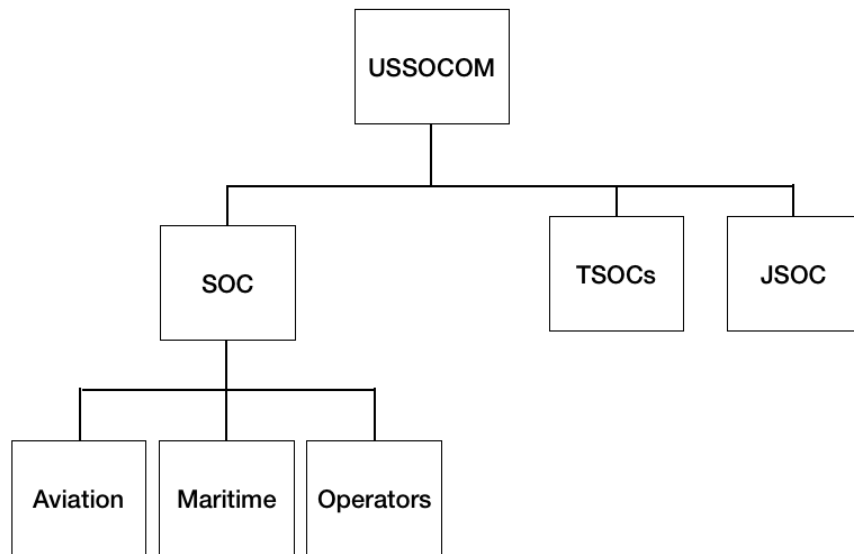


Figure 5. Recommended USSOCOM Structure

Source: Created by author.

Considering this recommendation one must be aware of potential problematic or consequences of USSOCOM becoming the seventh military service. One uncalculated outcome is the intricacies of establishing a separate administration for a service that has no administrative personnel such as administration, intelligence, supply, communication,

or medical. The enabling personnel would be recruited from the conventional services or potentially would be another component in the SOC. Another consideration to ask is what would happen to all the old SOSCC training facilities and where would the new headquarters would be located? The author does not have a solution, and this issue could be analyzed for further study.

The second recommendation, if USSOCOM did not become the seventh service, would be to create a Joint Training Command. In the Joint Training Command, unit level training would be common amongst the shared core activities for all the SOSCCs. The Ground Force Commander, Tactical leader training, and staff officer training would also be common to all SOSCCs. This would allow all key players in operations to have the same exact training. The instructors for each training block are rotational joint SOF members. These instructors would teach joint SOF SOPs/TTPs and then return to their respective SOSCC units and spread this knowledge. Lastly, the training locations would be the same for the SOSCCs. This unification allows for all SOF members to have an understanding of the capabilities of each unit and adapt TTPs faster, and more effectively across the SOSCCs. The integrated capabilities from joint training would create better communication on the joint battlefield. Outside of the training, everything within USSOCOM stays the same.

Considerations for this recommendation far exceed considerations for the first recommendation. This recommendation does not resolve the following concerns: debates over allocations between MFP-11 and MFP-2, USSOCOM recruits will still be dependent on conventional services, the double-jointed effect is only mitigated, the budget and

personnel growth does not stabilize, and some levels of communication across SOSCCs will not be heard. It is also possible that core activities that have unique primacy to SOF units such as UW and combat diving operations might. Lastly, the training facilities may cause increase in travel expenses for thousands of SOF to travel to the same training facilities. These issues are significant, but USSOCOM has made several adjustments throughout its existence, and one joint training command would be a significant step in the positive direction of peak SOF performance.

For Further Study

There are still several questions unanswered in this research, and there are many things the author would recommend for further research. The highest recommendation is to focus research on training. Truly understanding how different SOSCCs train would allow the researcher to discern the actual differences and areas of focus between each SOSCC in order to make a more confident statement on the need for a joint training command. Interviews and access to classified material would also possibly be required to answer how each SOSCC develops SOPs, TTPs, and training curriculum.

Another area for further study is the composition of the operator component within the SOC. New thought and research could recommend how many SOF members are appropriate for an operational unit and evaluate if the unique core activities would be compromised if the operators were able to execute in the sea, air, and land.

Conclusion

The three conclusions of the primary research question are that USSOCOM is trying to maintain SOSCCs earthly domains under the dominant land context of the

GWOT, the U.S. continues to increase reliance on USSOCOM, and the separate SOSCCs are a significant impingement on interoperability to conduct special operations. The two recommendations are to make USSOCOM the seventh military service or to create a Joint Training Command. Both recommendations discussed above are in essence to create better interoperability between SOSCCs in order to enhance the execution of special operations. This research is not a final declaration to liberate USSOCOM, but its overall intent is for the betterment of the force and the betterment of countless lives that are impacted by USSOCOM.

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