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AFSOC: THE AIR FORCES'S NEWEST COMMAND

BY

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2. From THE GUTS TO TRY by James H. Kyle. Copyright (c) 1990 by James H. Kyle. Reprinted by permission of Orion Books, a division of Crown Publishers, Inc.

AFSOC: THE AIR FORCE'S NEWEST COMMAND

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of Air Force Special Operations is steeped in tradition and rich in the individual accomplishments of colorful early air commandos. When the new Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) raised it's flag at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on 22 May 1990, the event marked nearly 75 years of air power involvement in unconventional warfare and special operations.[1] Today's special operators fit the mold of their predecessors: outspoken, positive leaders with innovative minds, who are both disciplined and bold at the same time.

TO SET THE STAGE

In his address to the Conference on Low-Intensity Warfare in January of 1986, Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger noted that "one out of every four countries around the globe is at war."[2] Since that time, even considering the end of the cold war with the Soviet Union, this figure has undoubtedly increased.

Across the spectrum of warfare, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have been utilized to further our national interests. However, history has shown that the United States has not been willing to support special or unconventional forces as an institutional part of its national strategy.

This begs the question, "Why?"

One of the most far-reaching casualties of Vietnam, Watergate, and congressional probes into grey and black programs (including the CIA of the mid-70s and the Iran-Contra Affair of the 1980s), was our nation's unconventional warfare/special operations capability. Many of our military leaders felt that guerrilla wars were unwinnable, and that public and congressional support would not stay the course for a long, protracted conflict for limited objectives.[3] These feelings have seriously limited any institutional support for special operations forces.

The fact is that SOF provides the National Command Authority (NCA) with a high risk, high gain capability that can significantly alter world events and tip the scales in favor of US national interests. Granted, in many instances special operations can be expected to have no better than a 50% chance of success. However, justification lies in the fact that SOF can produce exceptional results that make the risks associated with their use acceptable. Alternatives to SOF employment are often more costly and less desirable.[4] The AFSOC, as the air component of US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and as a MAJCOM, represents Air Force's commitment to this vital area of warfare.

OF AIR COMMANDOS AND SPECIAL OPERATORS

This research paper will review early SOF innovators and document many of their accomplishments. It has three purposes. The first is to provide a single source document which links today's AFSOC and 75 years

of special operation's heritage. Secondly, the paper will identify to the reader lessons learned from past SOF employments. And finally, the paper will provide the author's conclusions and recommendations concerning command focus and future direction.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

SOF, by its very nature, is involved in the black and gray world of covert and clandestine operations. No attempt is made by the author to draw or infer any SOF participation in these areas outside of published, unclassified sources noted.

Additionally, after a 13 year association with both Air Force and Army SOF operations, the author realizes that he brings certain biases and opinions to this work. However, to not infuse personal observations into this account would leave only a sterile and bland liturgy of facts and figures. Significant portions of Chapters V and VI are drawn from the author's personal experiences and expertise.

If there is a "bottom line" to America's experience in SOF, it is that the past provides the examples and the answers for almost any future use of this vital national resource.

Now, sit back, relax, and enjoy the following account of Air Force SOF.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER I

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2. Noel C. Koch, "Special Operations Forces: Tidying Up the Lines," Armed Forces Journal International, October 1988, p. 104.

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CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS OF SOF

The employment of air power in support of unconventional operations in a limited war is almost as old as the airplane itself. Six days after "Pancho" Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico on 9 March 1916, the 1st Aero Squadron was deployed to support military operations led by General John "Blackjack" Pershing. The squadron's primary role was to keep track of Pershing's forces and to deliver messages to his commanders. These were the first combat missions flown by American aviators.[1]

During World War I, the British successfully employed air power in support of Colonel T. E. Lawrence in his Palestine campaign. Lawrence used his aircraft in a similar manner as did Pershing; however, he expanded air power's role to include visual reconnaissance of enemy movement of men and supplies to strategic locations, and to attack Turkish communications.[2]

Prominent early theorist, including Giulio Douchet of Italy, Hugh M. Trenchard of Great Britain, and General Billy Mitchell of the United States further refined the role that air power would play in future wars. Douchet, as did Trenchard, emphasized the uniqueness of the aircraft as an offensive weapon. From the European theater of World War I, the primacy of the air superiority mission in the conduct of war emerged as one of the important lessons learned. As subsets to the air superiority mission, supremacy over the battlefield emerged as the first mission of an air force, with the secondary mission being strategic bombardment.

Using lessons learned from World War I, Mitchell set about applying them in the context of future war scenarios. His rigorous application of these early theories and experiences resulted in the emergence of strategic bombardment as the primary role of air power.

Concurrently with Billy Mitchell's aggressive development of strategic bombardment theory, air power application in counterguerrilla operations expanded. Lessons learned from the 1st Aero Squadron's employment in Mexico were applied in the 20s and 30s by the US Marines. From 1927 to 1933, marine aviators employed air power to fight guerrilla bands in the jungles of Nicaragua.[3]

As World War II dawned, the United States was ill-prepared to employ air power in support of the Allied cause. Only Mitchell's legacy of strategic bombardment theory had survived the frequent bureaucratic fights. Top priority was placed on strategic bombing. Virtually no effort was expended to develop an unconventional warfare capability.

THE AIR COMMANDOS ARE BORN

The innovative General Henry "Hap" Arnold was responsible for the creation of the first US air commando unit. Arnold seized upon the idea of aircraft in support of unconventional land forces at the Quadrant Conference held in Quebec in August of 1943.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill brought with him to the Conference the upstart Brigadier Orde C. Wingate, who was fresh out of the jungles of northern Burma. Wingate had impressed Churchill earlier in the year when he spearheaded a bold attack behind Japanese lines. The

operation was less than a total success: the primary limiting factor was the lack of adequate air power. Employing the unconventional concept of Long Range Penetration (LRP) land columns, Wingate used hit and run tactics to harass Japanese lines of communication. Crucial to his plan was the ability to move rapidly and to apply force at a specific location. The lack of resupply and the ability to extract his wounded forced him to terminate the operation early in June of 1943.[4]

At Quebec, Churchill and Wingate convinced President Roosevelt of the merits of the LRP concept. Roosevelt then tasked Arnold to develop the necessary air package to support Wingate. A second offensive was planned for the dry season of 1943-44.[5]

Arnold saw the opportunity to expand the air force into the newly rediscovered field of unconventional warfare. During the Quadrant Conference, British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten was named Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Command, and on 26 August 1943, Arnold met with him to discuss plans for support of Wingate in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater of Operations.[6]

Wingate's primary concern was with transport aircraft for troop movement and resupply, and light aircraft for medical evacuation of his wounded. To augment these aircraft, Arnold envisioned an assault force of fighter/bomber type aircraft that would serve as airborne artillery. In essence, what Arnold envisioned was a composite combat unit capable of fighting autonomously, thus requiring minimal support from other units.[7] Wingate was ecstatic over the positive reception his LRP theory had with Arnold.

The most difficult task for Arnold was finding the right man to head

this new unit. The man selected would have to work independently and aggressively in order to obtain needed support. Arnold narrowed his search to two candidates who possessed all the characteristics that he sought. LtCol Philip Cochran, who had distinguished himself as a fighter pilot in North Africa during 1942, was recognized by Arnold as an outspoken, positive leader who had the qualities necessary to build the new air commando organization. Cochran's exploits in North Africa were chronicled at the time by a college roommate, who protrayed him as "Flip Corkin" in the comic strip "Terry and the Pirates."[8] The second candidate for the job was LtCol John R. Alison, who was disciplined, quiet, and more inclined to lean toward compromise rather than confrontation.[9] Arnold could not decide which of the two men should be chosen, so he made them co-commanders.

With firm direction from Arnold, Cochran and Alison set about recruiting and equipping the new air commando unit, which was initially designated as Project 9. Personnel were recruited for fighter, transport, and light aircraft.[10] The co-commanders had little difficulty attracting adventurous, innovative personnel that would be required for survival in the jungles of Burma. The biggest obstacle came from parent units unwilling to give up some of their best flyers and support personnel. With Arnold's backing, however, Project 9 received virtually everyone that it wanted.

The type aircraft to be assigned to Project 9 was a different story. Cochran's first choice for the fighter requirement was the P-38 Lightning, but the aircraft was not available due to European war commitments. The P-47 Thunderbolt was his second choice. These were

also not available. Ultimately, the P-51A Mustang was provided.[11]

The transport aircraft chosen were the C-47 Dakota, the CG-4A Waco glider and the UC-64 Norseman "bush" type aircraft. The light aircraft section was made up of L-1 and L-5 aircraft, augmented by YR-4 helicopters. As this force materialized, it merged on Seymour-Johnson Air Base, North Carolina in September of 1943. Forward deployment to India was planned for October through December of the same year. Project 9 was redesignated as Project CA-281, then activated as the 5318th Provisional Unit (Air) prior to theater deployment.[12]

THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

The training was hectic, with few of the selected flyers proficient in glider tow operations. Members of the 5318th were able to procure the latest in glider equipment. With a minimum degree of proficiency, crews began departing CONUS for India on schedule. The route taken by the C-47s and support personnel was long and arduous: Seymour-Johnson to Miami, thence to Puerto Rico, Trinidad, British Guiana, Brazil, Ascention Island, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sudan, Aden, Masira Island and finally to Karachi.[13] The remainder of the aircraft were disassembled and transported via ship. 5318th personnel were responsible for assembling the aircraft once they arrived in India. The final operating locations were Lalaghat and Hailakandi, India (see Illustration 1, p. 10). After arrival in India, and by mutual consent, Col Cochran was deemed commander, and Col Alison became his deputy.[14]

By 15 December 1943, most of Cochran's forces had closed in India.

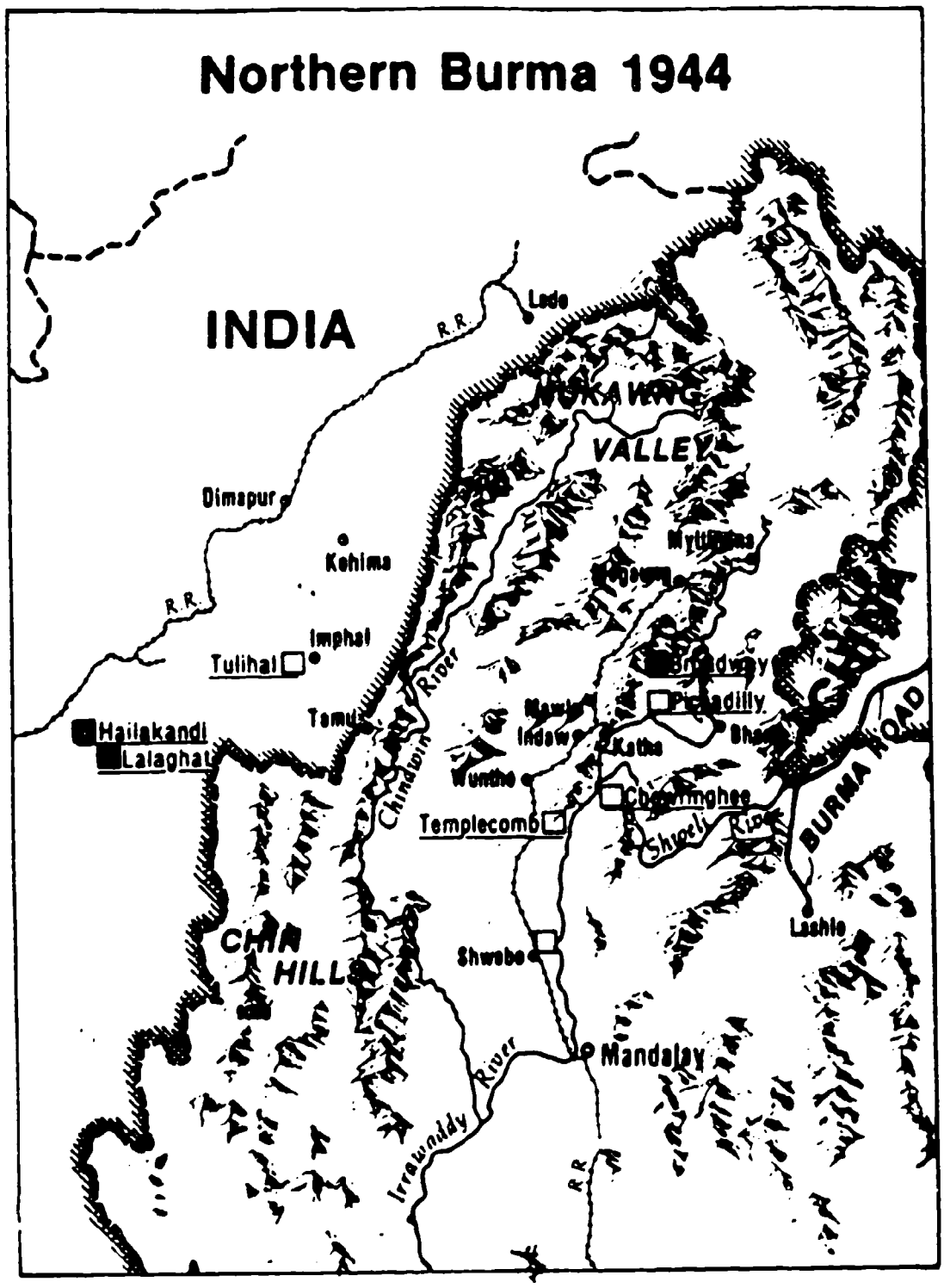

Illustration #1: Northeast India and Northern Burma, 1944

Once in-country, Cochran contacted Wingate for further tasking. Since his primary mission was to provide Wingate's forces mobility to operate behind enemy lines, the 5318th had a degree of autonomy unheard of even today.[15] The air assault concept for support of Wingate's forces called for glider insertion of a portion of his brigades behind Japanese lines, along with an engineering unit. With Wingate's soldiers acting as a defensive force, the engineers would carve out an airstrip capable of landing C-47 aircraft. The remainder of the brigade would then be airlanded. From the initial airstrip, additional landing zones would be established, dependent upon enemy activities.[16] Air commando fighter aircraft would provide cover from Japanese attack.

At the previous Quadrant Conference in August of 1943, Churchill had agreed to provide a Royal Air Force (RAF) bomber force to augment the air commandos. Cochran found that by December they simply were not available due to previous theater commitments. In a communique to Arnold, Cochran requested twelve B-25H Mitchell bombers, which Arnold promptly agreed to send. The aircraft arrived in India in early February of 1944.[17]

During February and March, as the 5318th constituted itself in eastern India, the air commandos flew numerous missions in support of conventional theater operations. Skills were improved to the level needed to successfully execute Wingate's campaign.[18] By early March of 1944, ground and air forces were ready.

Because of in-theater shortages in personnel and supplies, many commanders attempted to task the 5318th outside its primary mission of supporting Wingate. To keep his forces together, Cochran carried with him copies of two important documents outlining the mission of the air

commandos. The first was a memo from Arnold to Gen George C. Marshall, dated 13 Sep 1942, entitled "Air Task Force for Wingate", which outlined Cochran's support for Wingate. The second document was a letter from Arnold to Mountbatten, where Arnold spelled out the manner in which he wanted the air commandos employed.[19] The top priority placed on Cochran's 5318th Provisional Unit (Air) drew considerable resentment from other commanders in the theater, many of whom were unaware of the unit's mission.[20]

OPERATION THURSDAY

Operation THURSDAY was the codename given to Wingate's plan. The operating order was issued on 29 Feb 1944, for execution on 5 March. The objective of Operaton THURSDAY was to prove that the concept of airborne insertion and resupply of LRP columns was the most effective means of defeating the Japanese across Southeast Asia.[21] The 5318th would spearhead the operation utilizing assigned C-47 tow aircraft and Waco gliders. Additional C-47s would be provided by the in-theater Troop Carrier Command.[22]

The initial objective area was named BROADWAY landing zone (LZ). Total success on the first night of operations was not to be, although the overall operation resulted in a resounding success. A total of 37 Waco gliders reached BROADWAY. Of those, 34 were damaged upon landing. Twenty personnel were killed when their glider crashed short of the runway; four additional deaths and 33 injuries occurred on the LZ itself. On night one, 539 personnel, 3 mules, and 30,000 pounds of supplies were

airlanded on BROADWAY. By nightfall on 7 March, a 4,700 ft runway was in operation, and the Troop Carrier Command flew 62 C-47 sorties that night. The remainder of Wingate's forces were inserted into BROADWAY and to other newly created LZ's within the next several days (see Illustration 1, p. 10).[23]

Air commando P-51s and B-25s, augmented by RAF Spitfires, flew cover over and around the newly established LZ.[24] Almost a week passed before the Japanese discovered BROADWAY, but by this time, Wingate's LRP columns were already deployed against Japanese lines of communications. Unfortunately, on 24 March, a 5318th air commando B-25 crashed killing everyone on board, including Wingate and members of his staff. The loss of Wingate spelled doom for the LRP concept, because his predecessor did not hold a firm conviction that the concept would work throughout the theater.[25]

Coincidentally, on 25 March, the 5318th Provisional Unit (Air) was renamed the 1st Air Commando Group.[26] Three days later, Alison was recalled by Arnold to the US to establish additional air commando units.[27]

The concept of aerial invasion in support of LRP columns had proven to be successful. Arnold and Mountbatten were both impressed with the air commando effort.[28] In-theater commanders, however had a somewhat different view. The aviation commanders generally disapproved the air commandos being assigned to the ground commander (Wingate) for operational control, while being assigned to them for administrative support. Gen Stratemeyer and his subordinate commanders (3rd Tactical Air Force and Troop Carrier Command) felt that they could have done the

job just as well as the air commandos.[29]

Stratemeyer recommended to Arnold that the air commandos be regularized in organization or disbanded upon the completion of the Burma campaign. Arnold did not totally agree with him, but did recommend to Marshall that the air commandos be regularized and an additional four groups be formed and committed to the Pacific Theater. Consequently, when the 1st Air Commando Group stood up on 25 March, they were re-assigned to the 3rd Tactical Air Force.[30]

WITHDRAWAL, RECONSTITUTION, AND DEACTIVATION

Throughout April and May, the air commandos continued to support Allied operations in northern Burma. In late April, Arnold directed Stratemeyer to send Cochran and a cadre of air commando specialists back to the US to assist Alison in training the new air commando units. Cochran never returned to India. On 19 May 1944, the air commandos flew their last combat sorties of the operation after three and one half months of continuous combat. In May alone, they flew 219 fighter, 53 medium bomber, 300 transport (C-47 and UC-64), approximately 1900 light aircraft, three glider, and eighteen helicopter sorties.[31] An exhausted 1st Air Commando Group pulled out of northern Burma to bases in eastern India on 20 May. For the remainder of the summer and through early fall, the Group spent the majority of its time training replacement crews and recovering from the rigors of combat.

On 14 September 1944, the 1st Air Commando Group was assigned to the newly formed Combat Cargo Task Force, which also included the 177th

Wing, RAF, and the 1st Combat Cargo Group, USAAF. The air commandos remained assigned to the Task Force until its deactivation at the end of the war.[32] The 2nd Air Commando Group, having been trained in the US by Alison, arrived in India from September through November. The 3rd Air Commando Group deployed to New Guinea to support the planned invasion of Mindanao. When the plan changed to Leyte, the 3rd Group was absorbed into conventional units.[33]

The 1st and 2nd Air Commando Groups saw little action throughout the fall. The fighter elements began flying combat sorties in support of conventional operations in October and November. By December, the transport and light aircraft units were once again flying combat missions. From December of 1944 to the following May, the two Groups participated in Operations MULTIVITE, GUMPTION, FREEBORN, and DRACULA, with excellent results.[34] After the fall of Rangoon to the Allies and the surrender of all Japanese forces in Burma, the air commandos stood down from May of 1945 to the end of the war. On 6 October 1945, the air commandos departed India via ship and arrived in the US on 1 November 1945. Two days later, the 1st Air Commando Group was inactivated.[35] The 2nd Air Commando Group faced the same fate. No independent Air Commando group survived after the war.[36] Thus closed this chapter on the air commandos and on unconventional warfare in the Pacific.

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE - EUROPEAN STYLE

Prior to World War II, the preponderant role of air power in unconventional warfare operations was to support counterguerrilla

operations. In the European Theater, a new role for air power emerged: that of supporting operations of partisans and small conventional units behind enemy lines.[37]

Air Force B-24s were employed throughout the theater in support of Office of Strategic Service (OSS) directed infiltrations behind enemy lines. With concentration on North Africa in 1942 and France in 1943/44, the unconventional use of air power proved extraordinarily successful. Follow-up resupply missions were flown to keep partisan groups active and viable.[38]

During late 1943, 15th Air Force bombers launched thousand plane raids on the Ploesti oilfields and other targets in the Balkans. Hundreds of Allied crewmembers were shot down deep inside Yugoslavia. At the direction of Gen Nathan Twining, 15th AF Commander, a joint AF-OSS special project was organized. Air Force troop carrier units dropped OSS paratroopers into Yugoslavia, who in turn contacted partisan commanders to arrange for evacuation. By the end of 1943, over 100 downed airmen were successfully extracted from hidden airfields via C-47 transport aircraft. The operation was suspended due to the outbreak of civil war in Yugoslavia.[39]

In preparation for Operation OVERLORD, specially trained three-man "Jedburgh" teams were prepared to be dropped behind enemy lines in France. Their mission was to coordinate Free French operations with the invasion forces. In May of 1944, the first Jedburgh teams were dropped via air force special operations B-24 aircraft launched from bases in North Africa. Special operations crews became proficient in night low-level, long range navigation, usually conducted in poor weather, on

moonless nights, and in mountainous areas.[40] During early June, six more teams were dropped into strategic locations in Brittany, from which they relayed vital intelligence critical to the Normandy invasion.[41]

Later in June of 1944, Yugoslavian Gen Mihailovich sent word to the Allies that he was caring for a large group of American airmen, and offerred to render assistance in preparing them for repatriation. Twining again authorized a special operation under the codename "HALYARD MISSION", with OSS personnel and air force transport aircraft to be utilized in a joint operation.[42] On 2 August, two OSS operators were parachuted into the PRANJANE drop zone (DZ) with medical supplies and food. The existing runway was only eighteen hundred feet long, but with the help of three hundred partisan laborers, the strip was lengthened 250 feet by 8 Aug. Four C-47s landed on 9 Aug, and extracted twelve airmen each, which was the maximum load based on runway length. By first light on 10 Aug, six additional C-47s had landed and departed with their load of airmen. A total of 241 Americans, six British, four French, nine Italians, and twelve Russians were exfiltrated during the first 24 hours. Over the entire summer, 432 Americans and 80 other Allied personnel were evacuated.[43] Operations were again halted when Tito's forces overan the LZ.

Special operations missions continued as the Allies marched steadily across Europe. After Germany was pushed out of France, joint special operations/OSS missions steadily declined.

Unlike the Pacific, European special operators were not organized into separate air commando units. Had the OSS had such a dedicated air capability as did Wingate in the CBI Theater, they would have been able

to perform at even higher levels of effectiveness. As in the Pacific, when the war came to an end, no special operations capability was retained in the Army Air Corps.

UNCONVENTIONAL WAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

Shortly after the US disbanded its air commando units, Huk insurgents in the Philippines increased their subversive activities. From 1946-54, air power played a decisive role in defeating the communist movement. With US assistance, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) flew reconnaissance flights over known Huk strongholds.[44]

Once a camp was discovered, a psychological warfare campaign of leaflets and airborne speaker operations was initiated. If the psychological campaign was ineffective, concentrated air and ground attacks against the camp were carried out similar to earlier air commando operations in northern Burma. The Huks were confined to small-unit operations and were denied use of fixed bases.[45]

The PAF used a squadron of C-47s, a mixture of liaison aircraft, and a few P-51s and AT-6s in their war against the Huks. Again, air power was organized along unconventional lines very similar to the 1st Air Commando Group of World War II.[46] The PAF kept the Huks on the defensive throughout the campaign and had a decisive effect on their eventual defeat in 1954.

DISMEMBERMENT

By 1948, all remnants of the Air Commandos as an organizational entity had passed into history. For a short period during the Korean War, unconventional Air Ressuply and Communications Service (ARCS) units were employed north of the 38th parallel.[47] With the ARCS deactivation prior to the end of the Korean War, US unconventional warfare development entered a stage of dormancy, only to be rejuvenated by the Vietnam War.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER II

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3. Robert L. Brenci, Col, USAF (Ret), USAF Special Operations: The Forgotten Force, p. 7.

4. R. D. Van Wagner, 1st Air Commando Group: Any Place, Any Time, Anywhere, pp. 13-22.

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7. Barbara P. King, Maj, USAF, and Edward M. Leete, Maj, USAF, The 1st Air Commando Group of World War II: An Historical Perspective, p. 2.

8. Ibid., p. 16.

9. Van Wagner, p. 35.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., pp. 36-45.

12. King and Leete, p. 2.

13. Van Wagner, pp. 46-50.

14. Ibid.

15. Brenci, p. 7.

16. Van Wagner, p. 51.

17. Ibid., p. 53.

18. Ibid., pp. 55-57.

19. King and Leete, p. 58.

20. Ibid., p. 59.

21. Ibid., p. 107.

22. Van Wagner, pp. 61-64.

23. Ibid., pp. 71-77.

24. King and Leete, p. 129.

25. Van Wagner, pp. 86-87.

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29. Ibid., p. 152.

30. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

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34. King and Leete, pp. 165-168.

35. Ibid., pp. 217-218.

36. Van Wagner, pp. 101-102.

37. Alnwick, p. 22.

38. Corey Ford, Donovan of OSS, p. 233.

39. Ibid, pp. 205-206.

40. Brenci, p. 7.

41. Ford, pp. 233-234.

42. Ibid., p. 207.

43. Ibid., pp. 209-212.

44. Alnwick, p. 23.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Brenci, p. 8.

CHAPTER III

FROM VIETNAM TO DESERT ONE

Throughout the remainder of the 1950s, the US Air Force had no unconventional warfare capability. All this was to change dramatically because of two significant events: the 6 April 1961 announcement by Nikita Khruschev that the Soviet Union intended to dominate world affairs through national "wars of liberation" in the Third World and the election of John F. Kennedy to the US presidency.[1]

The Kennedy Doctrine was formalized on 28 June 1961 with the issuance of National Security Memorandum 56 (NSM 56). The focus of NSM 56 was threefold: (1) insurgency is a global threat, (2) communist exploitation of social forces worldwide is the root cause of this threat, and (3) the US will meet this new and increasing threat.[2]

Speaking to the graduating class of West Point in 1962, Kennedy said:

> This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin....It requires...a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.[3]

It was in this context that USAF special operations was reborn. On 14 April 1961, USAF established the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS). Nicknamed "Jungle Jim", the CCTS was based at Hurlburt Field, Florida, with a twofold mission: training and combat operations.[4]

Recalling the success of the air commandos of the CBI Theater during World War II, the CCTS was organized, equipped and manned along the lines of their WW-II counterpart.[5] Flying vintage C-47, T-28, and B-26

aircraft, the unit was operationally ready by 8 September 1961. Without the help of established doctrine, the CCTS devised the tactics and techniques for building a counterinsurgency capability in Third World countries from Latin America to Africa, and from the Middle East to Southeast Asia.[6]

The first Jungle Jim operation, codenamed SANDY BEACH ONE, involved training Mali paratroopers to operate from C-47 aircraft.[7] The operation was a resounding success.

In November of 1961, 4400th CCTS deployed a detachment to Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam, on Operation FARMGATE.[8] Thus, Air Force special operations forces flew the first US combat missions in Vietnam. The Bien Hoa operation was soon to consume nearly all of USAF's commitment to supporting counterguerrilla operations.[9]

THE SPECIAL AIR WARFARE CENTER IS BORN

USAF special operations continued to expand along with the growing commitment to Southeast Asia. The 4400th CCTS grew into the 4400th Combat Crew Training Group (CCTG) in March of 1962, with a total strength of 1,800 personnel.[10] On 27 April 1962, the Group was incorporated into the USAF Special Air Warfare Center (USAF SAWC). The mission of SAWC was to:

> Provide command and staff supervision over assigned units engaged in training aircrews and maintenance personnel in operations and employment of aircraft for fulfilling the Air Force mission in counterinsurgency situations and the development, in coordination with other services, of the doctrine, tactics, procedures, and equipment employed by air forces in counterinsurgency operations.[11]

To augment already assigned aircraft, additional assets were added to SAWC throughout the mid 1960s, including A-1, O-1, O-2, A-37, C-46, C-119, C-123, and later C-130 aircraft, along with numerous types of helicopters.[12] The SAWC, commanded by a general officer, reported directly to Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, at Langley AFB, Virginia, an arrangement which bypassed 9th Air Force as an intermediate headquarters.[13] By early 1964, SAWC had grown from a small unit with limited resources to almost 3,000 personnel spread throughout the world, several hundred aircraft, and priority funding for its projects.[14]

The 4400th CCTG was responsible for training crews in all aspects of unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency air operations. The CCTG provided training in low-level parachute resupply, close air support, use of flares for night operations, assault takeoffs and landings, psychological operations with leaflets and loudspeakers, and other counterguerrilla techniques. In addition to flying skills, air commandos were also given area orientation and basic language training for the area in which they were to be deployed. They learned a 600-800 word French or Spanish vocabulary before being certified for OCONUS deployment.[15]

The rapid growth of SAWC can be attributed to Kennedy's call for an unconventional warfare capability. However, men and equipment were thrown together quickly, and there was no time to develop doctrine and long range strategies from which Air Force counterinsurgency forces could develop plans for optimum employment. Much of the organization, equipment, planning, doctrine, and concept of operations were ad hoc affairs. By 1966, SOF assets had increased to 5,000 personnel and 550 aircraft in 19 squadrons. Air commandos were deployed worldwide to such

countries as Mali, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Iran, Thailand and the Congo Republic.[16] This tremendous operational commitment eliminated the ability to develop long range plans and unconventional warfare strategy. Entering the counterinsurgency arena without either adequate vision or doctrine had driven the SAWC to employ primarily conventional tactics rather than develop those necessary to fight small wars. As did the air commandos of World War II, the people assigned the task came through by organizing and fielding a credible SOF capability.[17]

SOF forces enjoyed many successes. In 1964, air commandos from Hurlburt Field deployed to Laos and Thailand on Operation WATERPUMP. From a rice warehouse in Vientiene, Laos, a few airmen kept Laotian and Thai T-28s in operation and provided a link between US embassy personnel and Seventh Air Force.[18] Training pilots of the almost defunct Royal Lao Air Force (RLAF) and the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF), air commandos were diectly responsible for support of the Royal Lao Army (RLA). A combined RLAF/RTAF/RLA operation successfully blunted a major Pathet Lao offensive. The follow-up operation, known as Operation TRIANGLE, was extremely successful. This was a classic operation whereby USAF knowledge and expertise were taught to a friendly air force without exposing a single American to combat.[19] The RLAF was able to build to a 3,000 strike sortie per month capability over the next several years.[20] Similar successes in Central and South America were enjoyed in civic action and mobile training team deployments during the mid 1960s.

USAFSOF AND SON TAY

On 8 July 1968, SAWC was redesignated USAF Special Operations Force (USAFSOF) and became the equivalent of a numbered air force.[21] Units under SAWC were redesignated as special operations wings and squadrons, thus eliminating all reference to air commandos. The Vietnam War was at its peak and consumed virtually all of USAFSOF's attention. From this time forward, the requirement to provide mobile training teams to unified commands outside the Southeast Asia Theater was totally ignored.

The most notable SOF mission of the Vietnam era was the Son Tay prisoner of war camp raid in 1970. Although the Vietnam conflict was winding down, this mission was an excellent example of applying air power in a joint unconventional operation employing both SOF and conventional forces. USAF and US Army special operations units were the mainstay of committed forces. Although the operation did not accomplish its primary objective, it was worth the effort because of the boost in our POW's morale and their improved treatment.[22]

AC-130H AND THE DECLINE OF SOF

In the same innovative mode as Cochran's air commandos of World War II, the Vietnam era commandos were responsible for the first ever employment of the gunship weapons system. Beginning with the AC-47 and AC-119 in the late sixties, the concept matured into the AC-130 in the early 1970s. Besides destroying trucks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, SOF AC-130 crews played a major role in the 1972 NVA Easter Offensive, the

siege of An Loc, in Lam Son 719, and in other operations too numerous to list.[23]

As the Nixon Doctrine became reality and the Vietnam War began winding down, SOF was gradually squeezed by budget and manpower cuts. By the early 1970s, SOF unit manning had declined by 70% and continued to decline throughout the decade. On 30 June 1974, the USAFSOF was redesignated the 834th Tactical Composite Wing (TCW), effectively bringing to a close the most aggressive, far reaching effort by USAF to support unconventional warfare operations.[24] On 1 July 1975, the 834th TCW was renamed the 1st Special Operations Wing (1st SOW), the designation which it had carried from 8 July 1968 to 30 June 1974.[25]

APPROACH TO DESERT ONE

Since the watershed year of 1966, SOF had been on a steady decline, suffering from the military version of the "Vietnam Syndrome". USAF priorities went to the modernization and rebuilding of conventional air forces.[26] A severe lack of funds and resources continually put SOF below the budget cut line.

By 1979, it was clear to everyone inside SOF that the USAF unconventional warfare capability was on the verge of extinction. Only one SOF wing, the 1st SOW at Hurlburt Field, two MC-130E Combat Talon squadrons overseas, one AC-130A reserve gunship unit, and one HH-3 reserve special operations unit remained of the vast worldwide force built in the mid sixties.

The 1st SOW AC-130H gunship program was not funded by USAF after

1980, and the MC-130E Combat Talons were on the margins. This meager force was all that the USAF possessed on 4 November 1979 when Iranian students overran our Marine guards in Tehran, Iran. In retrospect, the failure at Desert One and subsequent congressional direction saved SOF from the same fate as the air commandos of World War II.

THE IRANIAN MISSION; A BOLD ATTEMPT TO RESCUE AMERICANS IN PERIL

From initial notification in early November of 1979 to execution in April of 1980, SOF personnel created capabilities and developed unique equipment expressly for the rescue mission. As an example, four days after notification, MC-130E aircrews were flying their first night vision goggle (NVG) airland missions. No USAF fixed wing aircraft had ever landed on NVGs. Rotary wing aircraft were just beginning to develop their NVG procedures. Critical questions concerning depth perception and external light sources had to be answered. Internal aircrew procedures had to be developed, and aircrews had to train to a higher level of expertise.

Internal (cargo compartment) fuel blatter systems not used since the early Vietnam days were dusted off, and procedures for their proper use were relearned. Methods for airdrop of heavy equipment loads, including multiple 5,000 pound blivets and 25,000 pound bulldozers, were developed almost from scratch. Formation low-level procedures and dual runway operations went from conception to reality within a month. Ten years of SOF tactics were developed in less than six months. Equipment never before fielded was procured and put into operation within a few weeks.

Again, the spirit and pride of earlier air commandos came through. Twelve to sixteen hour days, six to seven days a week, were common. When the deployment order was issued on 18 April 1980, few within USAF SOF doubted that the force was ready.[27]

The mission, from the very start, was a bold attempt to save Americans in peril. In retrospect, there was probably no better than a 50% chance of success, given the complexity of the mission and the requirement for absolute surprise at the embassy in Tehran (see Illustrations 2 and 3, pp. 30 and 31). Yet, the effort had to be made, for there were no other options left to the President.

History has recorded the events on the night of 24 April 1980. Although a disaster, its failure did not result from a lack of dedication and determination by all who participated.

THE HOLLOWAY COMMISSION REPORT

Within days of the failure at Desert One, the Washington Post and the New York Times had already run feature articles criticizing the general competency of the US armed forces and the extremely poor quality of advice given to the President. With the failure of any military operation comes the inevitable review process to determine what went wrong and to place blame where it belonged. The Holloway Commission was convened in the post Desert One period to do just that.

After months of review and investigation into all aspects of the planning and execution of the operation, the Commission concluded that "We encountered not a shread of evidence of culpable neglect or

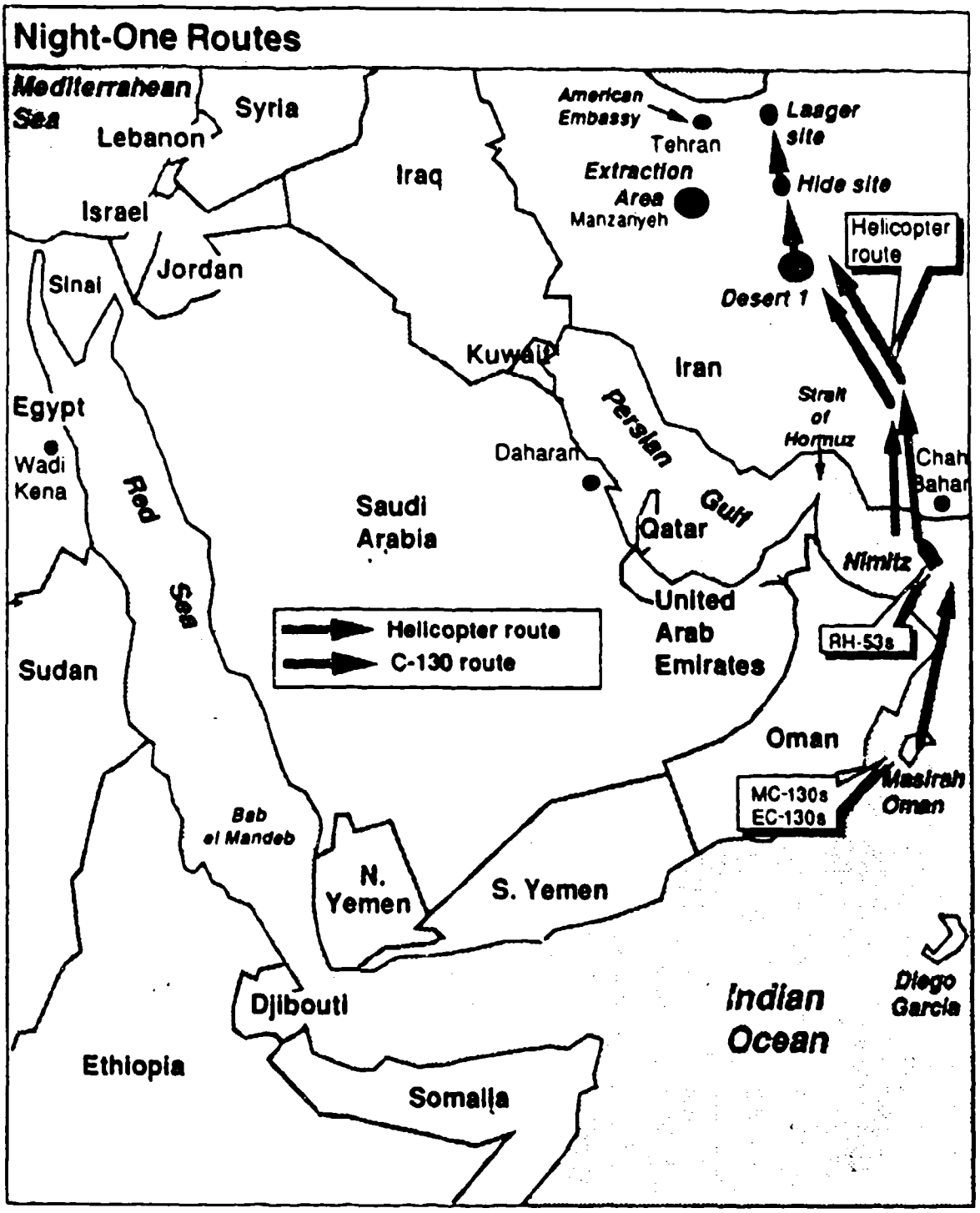

Illustration #2:
Night One Operations from USS Nimitz/Coral Sea, and Masirah

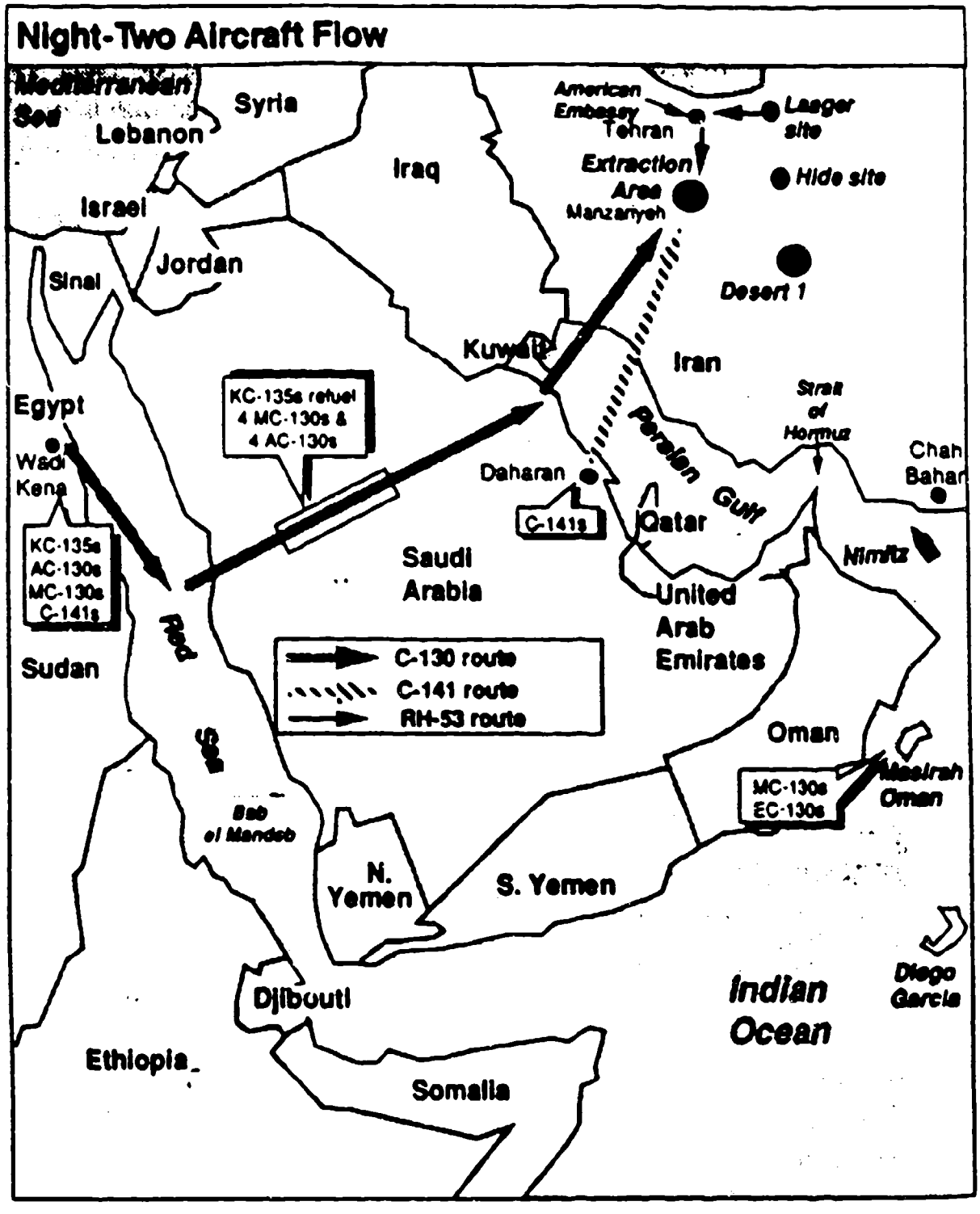

Illustration #3: Night Two Operations from Wadi Kena, Egypt

incompetence."[29] The Commission further stated that:

> The American servicemen who participated in this mission - planner, crewman, or trooper - deserved to have a successful outcome. It was the ability, dedication, and enthusiasm of these people who made what everyone thought was an impossibility into what should have been a success.[30]

The Commission concluded that two factors combined to directly cause the mission to abort: low visibility enroute to Desert One and an unexpected helicopter failure rate.[31]

The Commission uncovered 23 issues that it considered to have "an identifiable influence" on the outcome of the mission and that "should receive careful consideration for future special operations." Two primary concerns were determined to be the root cause of several of these issues: the ad hoc nature of the organization and planning, and the stringent requirements placed on OPSEC (see Illustration 4, p. 33).[32]

By choice rather than by necessity, the organizational structure of the Task Force was set up completely ad hoc, even though there existed at the time a JCS Crisis Action System which provided guidance for the conduct of planning during emergency or time-sensitive situations. There also existed an approved concept plan which the Commission concluded contained "a stable, existing framework... to organize, plan, train, and execute the mission."[33]

Through excessive compartmentalization, the Commission determined that the perceived need for OPSEC dominated almost every decision, and caused or contributed to several shortfalls. The ad hoc arrangement of the Task Force was a result of this OPSEC concern. The result of this compartmentalization was that the mission remained a secret; however, critical review outside the Task Force was not accomplished, thus

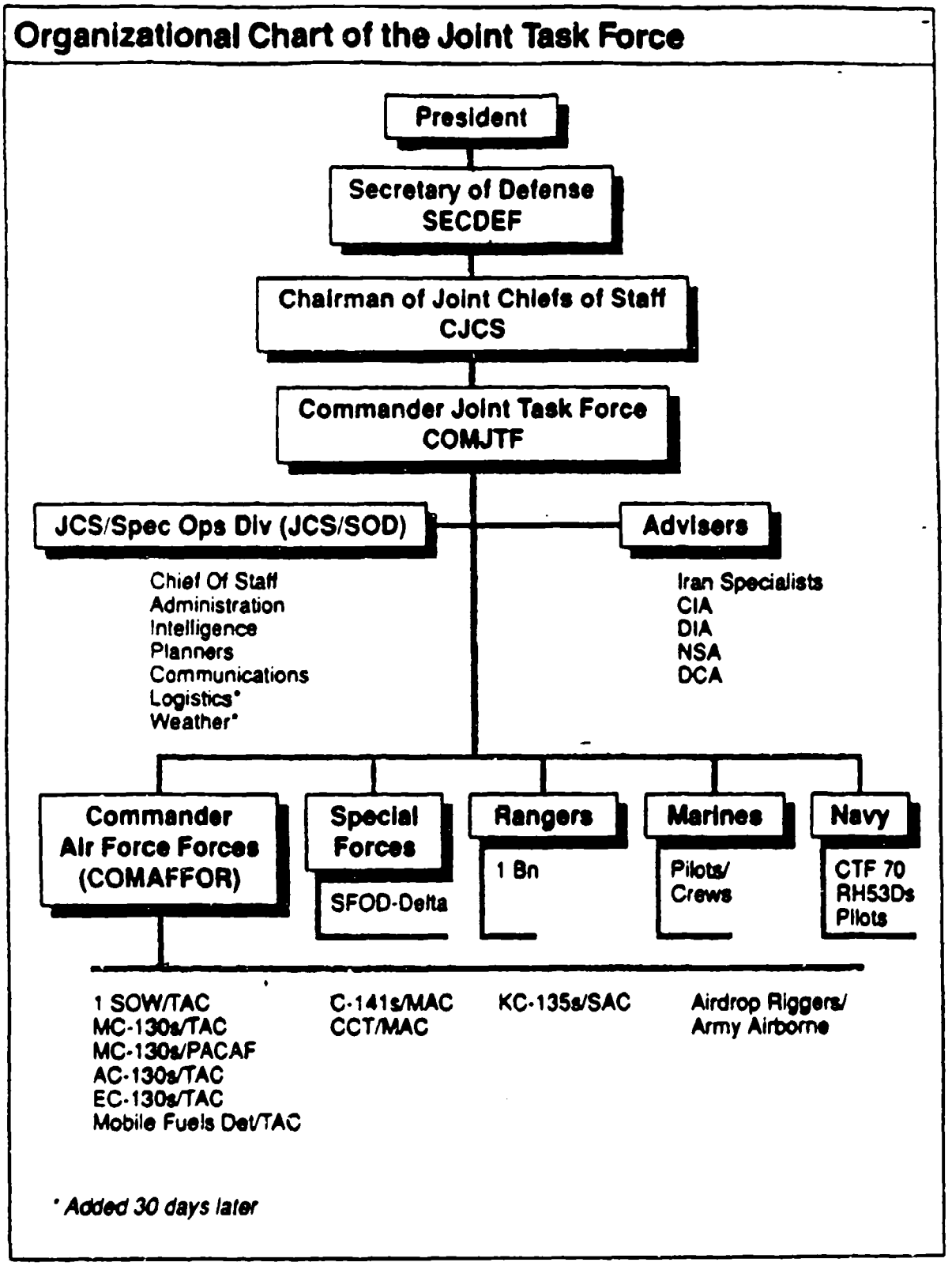

Illustration #4: JTF Organizational Chart

possibly contributing to mission failure.[34]

The Holloway Commission produced two major recommendations. First, the Department of Defense should establish a counterterrorism task force, with a permanently assigned staff and forces. Second, the Commission proposed that the JCS consider the formation of a Special Operations Advisory Panel. This panel, composed of active and retired senior military officers, would provide JCS an independent review of future covert special operations.[35]

The bottom line to the Holloway Report was that a trained task force had not been instantly ready and that the JCS had lacked an advisory panel. Realizing the need for both, Congress and the Service Chiefs set out to correct this situation.

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CHAPTER IV

POST DESERT ONE: IN SEARCH OF A CURE

The events of Desert One did not bring an end to the hostage crisis. Indeed, from May through December 1980, USAF SOF continued to develop tactics and to explore military options should a second rescue attempt be required. Joint exercises were conducted to validate these options. Only after the hostages were released and safely in the US did senior USAF leadership begin to focus on a solution to the problems identified in the Holloway Commission Report and by subsequent reviews of SOF after Desert One.

CONGRESS WAKES UP

In reviewing the recent history of SOF leading up to Desert One, Congress determined that SOF had been on a roller coaster ride, building up for specific employment (i.e. World War II) or reacting to aggression in the Third World (i.e. Vietnam). After each buildup, SOF was decimated and receded into the background (or ceased to exist altogether) while our national security concerns focused on deterring major conventional or nuclear war.[1]

The "boom or bust" cycle was viewed as wasteful by Congress for two reasons. First, SOF was a bargain relative to the overall defense budget, yet the personnel required to operate the many specialized systems took years to train, and these specialized systems were not

easily employed outside specific limited scenarios. To build a credible SOF force could take a decade or more before all the component parts were refined into a cohesive unit.[2] Secondly, modern day contingency requirements have become more time sensitive. Congress discerned that the nation could not wait to build a capability to respond to counterterrorism or other quickly developing crises counter to US national interests. Desert One had proven that the US did not have a force capable of succeeding, even after six months of preparation.[3]

For Congress, the "fix" was to institutionalize SOF within the Department of Defense. SOF had to be kept at a high state of readiness and maintained at least at a constant level to prevent the costly and inefficient cycles seen in the past.[4]

AIR FORCE LOOKS AT ITSELF

During the summer of 1980, Air Staff diverted nine HH-53 Pave Low helicopters, destined for Military Airlift Command (MAC), to the Tactical Air Command's (TAC) SOF wing at Hurlburt Field. With the addition of these Pave Low helicopters, USAF active duty SOF forces consisted of 14 MC-130E Combat Talons (eight stationed overseas and six at Hurlburt Field), the nine HH-53s, and ten AC-130H Spectre gunships. Reserve SOF consisted of ten AC-130As and six CH-3E helicopters.[5]

As a result of the continued Iranian operational commitment throughout 1980, no further formal Air Force review of SOF was accomplished. In November of 1981, the Inspector General, USAF (AF/IG) and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Readiness

(AF/XO), directed a full-scale investigation of USAF SOF capabilities. This investigation, known as a Functional Management Inspection (FMI), was conducted from November of 1981 to July of 1982. The FMI team gathered data, identified problems, and made recommendations as to how SOF could better meet national security objectives. The team identified three critical areas: (1) lack of essential mission elements (SOF roles and missions, operational doctrine, and tactics), (2) inadequate force structure, and (3) force readiness. The team determined that "the Air Force is not currently capable of fully supporting JCS/unified command special operations."[6]

In December of 1982, the USAF Chief of Staff decided to transfer SOF forces from TAC to MAC, and to place those forces in an Air Division co-equal to Air Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) under a MAC numbered air force. Stand-up date for the new 23rd Air Force was set for 1 March 1983.[7]

23RD AIR FORCE IS BORN

As directed in December of 1982, the new numbered air force stood up on 1 March 1983 at Scott AFB, Illinois, utilizing ARRS staff and facilities. Of a total command population of approximately 10,500 personnel, SOF forces totalled 3,500. The mission of 23rd Air Force included combat rescue, peacetime search and rescue, weather reconnaisance, high altitude atmospheric sampling, missile site support, aeromedical evacuation, operational support airlift, and SOF.[8]

Many who had spent their careers in SOF looked upon the

consolidation under MAC as a hostile takeover by a much larger bureaucracy that had little concern regarding SOF revitalization. Rather, some SOF careerists felt that the true object of the new arrangement was to enhance AF rescue capabilities, and to retain only the subordinate mission of SOF. As rugged individualists in the mode of WW-II and Vietnam era air commandos, they resented being commanded by a staff with virtually no SOF background. Consequently, MAC's efforts to augment the 23rd AF staff with high quality SOF personnel was continually met by resistance, and several special operators who were forcibly assigned to the staff did not fare well on future promotion boards.

In all fairness, however, the consolidation of SOF under MAC had more positive benefits than disadvantages. Air Staff had institutionalized SOF under a command that had aggressively sought the special air operations mission. Prior to 1 March 1983, there existed only two dedicated SOF positions above wing level: one at 9th AF and one at HQ TAC. Air Staff had several positions traditionally filled by SOF officers, but were often filled by TAC fighter pilots outside the core community. MAC provided an umbrella for SOF personnel to grow and advance from wing to numbered AF, then on to the headquarters staff. For the first time, overseas returnees had a command that was concerned with their CONUS assignment and with their future advancement.

The dismal promotion rate for SOF personnel experienced under TAC in the 1970s and early 1980s began to change as early as 1984. MAC realized that to build and maintain a viable force, officers with SOF background had to be promoted at least at the rate of their contemporaries.[9]

Acquisition of specialized SOF equipment was either initiated or, if

the program was already ongoing as in the case of the MC-130H Combat Talon II, was incorporated into the command's programs. MAC initiated actions to procure the UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter, and developed a SOF navigation system upgrade to existing MAC airlift and selected rescue aircraft. Additionally, upgrades to existing AC-130 and MC-130 aircraft, including new avionics packages and navigation systems, were begun. Specialized equipment acquired for SOF consisted of night vision goggles, secure voice radios, NVG compatible aircraft lighting, infrared and defensive countermeasures, and precision navigation equipment.[10]

AND CONGRESS SAID: "IT IS NOT GOOD!"

To develop career programs and to acquire new equipment took time. Although MAC had worked to revitalize SOF, little concrete evidence of this effort was apparent to Congress. In October of 1983, just eight months after consolidation under MAC, Operation URGENT FURY, the liberation of the island of Granada after a violent military coup, was executed. Many of the same problems (command and control, joint operations, participation by all services in the operation, etc.) that had been identified during Desert One surfaced again. After three years, it appeared that the US had made little progress.

To Congress, one of the litmus tests to an improved USAF SOF capability was "rubber on the ramp". By 1984, there were actually fewer SOF specific airframes in existence than in the summer of 1980. (One MC-130E Combat Talon and two Pave Low helicopters had crashed in the 1981-84 timeframe.) The MC-130H Combat Talon II (CT-II) program was

particularly frustrating to Congress.

During the early 1970s, MC-130E Combat Talon I aircraft were introduced into the Air Force inventory. They were specially modified C-130 aircraft built between 1962 and 1964 that had terrain-following radar, special electronic countermeasures, and other classified modifications that allowed them to fly as low as 250 ft in all weather, mountainous terrain and in hostile territory. There were 14 Talons at the time of the Iranian mission. Twelve additional CT-IIs were funded in the Fiscal Year 1982 budget, with delivery in FY 1985-86. The Air Force consistently slipped CT-II procurement into the planning outyears. The CT-II experience was to have a profound impact on Congress' decision to reorganize SOF later in the 1980s.[11]

With the creation of the Special Operations Panel under the House Armed Services Committee in 1983, congressional interest in SOF and Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC) surfaced. Similar interest soon came from the Senate Armed Services Committee. Congressional oversight initially focused on the Reagon Administration's revitalization initiatives; however, as time passed, congressional concern shifted from people, things and money to structure and process.[12]

THE CASE FOR A SIXTH SERVICE

Although Air Force SOF initiatives were progressing under MAC (the 1984 AFSOF Master Plan marked a milestone in the history of AFSOF force structure development), some members of Congress were not satisfied with the pace of SOF revitalization within the Air Force and within the other

services.[13] The CT-II program had continued to slip into the outyears, and in May of 1984, the Chief of Staff of the Army (General Wickham) and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (General Gabriel) agreed to implement 31 Joint Force Development Initiatives. Initiative 17 stated, "The Air Force will transfer the responsibility for providing rotary wing lift support for SOF to the Army."[14] On the surface, this seemed to be a logical initiative; the Air Force had only seven remaining Pave Low helicopters supporting primarily Army special forces units, while the Army had thousands of helicopters to support their forces. A closer look revealed that the only air refuelable, low-level, all weather capable airframe, equipped with sophisticated electronic countermeasures and long range navigation equipment, was the Air Force Pave Low helicopter. Additionally, fixed wing tanker support, qualified aircrews, and the infrastructure to support the helicopter SOF mission were all retained within the Air Force.[15] Many in Congress viewed Initiative 17 as another example of the shallow commitment to special operations by Air Force leadership.

In August of 1985, Representative Dan Daniel published an article in Armed Forces Journal advocating the creation of a sixth service dedicated to Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. Daniel was convinced that current SOF modernization initiatives were, in fact, treating the symptoms rather than the disease.[16] He felt that although SOF were organizationally part of three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force), SOF had never been truly institutionally part of those Services. He argued that SOF did not "fit" into the conventional military and concluded that the current system didn't work because the individual Services held SOF

to be peripheral to the interests, missions, goals, and traditions that the Services viewed essential.[17] Listing seven key reasons why a sixth Service was needed, Daniel felt that anything less would result in continued poor performance by SOF because the Services would ultimately determine the health of SOF by controlling forces and dollars committed to it.[18]

THE DEFENSE SPECIAL OPERATIONS AGENCY

Soon after Daniel's article appeared, Senator William Cohen called for a national special operations agency in January of 1986. He outlined an organization which he named the Defense Special Operations Agency (DSOA), which would be made up of two major components: an agency staff and a subordinate joint command. The DSOA mission would be to prepare and conduct joint special operations. He envisioned the DSOA reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense. Command and control would be exercised through the subordinate joint command.[19]

All SOF Army, Navy and Air Force assets would be assigned to this new joint command. It would maintain liaison elements within each of the unified commands. During periods of war, the joint command would forward deploy to the wartime theater, and serve as that CINC's Special Operations Command. On the civilian side, an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations would provide the civilian control necessary to conduct politically sensitive special operations.[20]

THE DIE IS CAST FOR USSOCOM

By May of 1986, Cohen, with co-sponsorship by Senator Sam Nunn, introduced Senate Bill S.2453, and the following month, Daniel introduced H.R.5109 in the House.[21] Many of the key provisions of these two bills formed the basis of the 1987 Defense Authorization Bill that was signed into law on 14 October 1986.[22]

In essence, the Bill directed the formation of a unified command for SOF (US Special Operations Command), created the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, and established a Coordinating Board for Low-Intensity Conflict within the National Security Council.[23]

Perhaps the most far-reaching provision of the Bill was the creation of Major Force Program 11 (MFP 11). Historically, SOF funding had come from throughout the funding programs, and had often been lumped with larger programs within each Service's POM. Because SOF expenditures were such a small portion of the overall spending authority, they were extremely difficult to manage. Consolidation under MFP 11 made money visible to both the Services and to Congress, and it provided a measure of protection against spending SOF earmarked funds on non-SOF items.[24]

In January of 1987, Air Force announced that it would move Headquarters, 23rd Air Force from Scott AFB, Illinois, to Hurlburt Field, Florida. On 30 July 1987, 23rd Air Force commander Maj Gen Robert B. Patterson issued a statement concerning his understanding of the new relationships among MAC, USSOCOM, the other unified commands, and HQ 23rd AF. Twenty-third Air Force, the Air Force component of USSOCOM, was

informally designated as the Air Force Special Operations Command.[28] On 1 August 1987, the 23rd AF flag-raising ceremony was held at Hurlburt Field. Thus began the next chapter in the evolution of Air Force SOF.

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CHAPTER V

THE GROWTH AND MATURITY OF THE AFSOC

When the 23rd AF/AFSOC's flag was raised at Hurlburt Field in August of 1987, there was much excitement and fanfare. It was a rough and difficult road, however, that Gen Patterson had taken to get the unit to that point. Years of history and tradition, most of which were on the rescue side of the house, were to have a direct impact on how the command was viewed by Congress and by USSOCOM.

AEROSPACE RESCUE AND RECOVERY SERVICE HERITAGE

To appreciate the position that Patterson found himself in, a brief review of combat rescue and its impact on modern day SOF is required.

Combat rescue traces its origins back to the Air Rescue Service (ARS) and the period immediately following World War II (1946). During the Korean War, ARS crews airlifted more that 9,600 Allied personnel to safety. Helicopter combat rescue tactics that would later be employed in Southeast Asia (SEA) were developed during this period.[1]

In 1964, as our involvement in SEA increased, four ARS provisional detachments were deployed to the region. In 1966, ARS changed its name to Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS). A gradual buildup of combat rescue forces mirrored our increased commitment to the war, and reached its peak in 1972. A gradual decrease in ARRS committed forces was realized from 1972 to 1975, when all US forces were withdrawn from

South Vietnam. During the eleven year commitment, combat rescue crews were responsible for saving the lives of 4,120 personnel, with 2,780 of those being combat saves.[2] An aura and mistique grew up around the heroic accomplishments of the "Jolly-Green Giant" CH-3/CH-53.

IT'S MY PAVE LOW...NO, IT'S MINE!

As was the case for post Vietnam SOF, combat rescue suffered somewhat the same fate, but not to the same degree. Critical research and development was continued to develop a night, combat rescue capability that was identified as a critical shortcoming of the SEA rescue force. By 1979, the CH-53 helicopter had been upgraded to the Pave Low I configuration, and entered an extensive operational test and evaluation phase of its development. These aircraft were equipped with terrain-following radar (similar to the MC-130E Combat Talon I), inflight air refueling, and other modifications that would give combat rescue a night combat Search and Rescue (SAR) capability for the first time.

In the aftermath of the Desert One failure, Air Staff made the decision to redirect these aircraft, newly designated as the HH-53 Pave Low I, to TAC and the 1st SOW at Hurlburt Field for possible use later should a second Iranian mission be required.

Those in combat rescue must have felt like their newborn child had been snatched from them at the moment of birth. Years of effort and a significant portion of funds allocated to combat rescue was thus redirected to SOF. Resentment brewed as both SOF and SAR personnel refused to look past the transfer action to the reasons why Air Staff

made the decision.

When 23rd AF was created in 1983, its staff was comprised almost exclusively of former ARRS personnel. There was a feeling within SOF that combat rescue had, in fact, gotten its way and had regained control over SOF and the Pave Low.

WHO GETS THE DOLLARS?

In the ensuing years, additional efforts by MAC and 23rd AF did little to dissuade the SOF community. An aggressive program to modify conventional C-130 and C-141 aircraft to Special Operations Low-Level (SOLL) configuration was begun. Some believed this was at the expense of the MC-130E Combat Talon I upgrade and the Combat Talon II program. HC-130H tanker aircraft received some SOF improvements. Six of the existing MC-130Es were modified for helicopter aerial refueling and were looked upon almost as a rescue curse among SOF operators. Even the establishment of 23rd AF at Hurlburt Field caused friction. The new headquarters building for the 1st SOW, which had been on the drawing board for years, was nearing completion in the spring of 1987. Lacking adequate facilities to house the new headquarters, MAC made the decison to transfer the complex from the 1st SOW to 23rd AF, thus leaving the 1st SOW scattered throughout the base in late 1950's and early 1960's structures. Again, SOF careerists felt they had been taken advantage of unfairly.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TAKES CHARGE

To meld the two divergent personalities of SOF and Combat SAR would take a true visionary who would stay the course and channel the extraordinary energies of both into a capability vital to our national interests. On 20 September 1985, that individual, Maj Gen Patterson, took command of the 23rd AF. He was no stranger to unconventional warfare. He was intimately involved in Operation URGENT FURY in 1983 as Commander, 21st AF, and saw firsthand the problems encountered in that operation.

As the new commander of 23rd AF, he set about aggressively to upgrade and enhance the SOF force. One of his first priorities was to develop a comprehensive SOF reorganization plan that would form the basis for SOF in the 1990s and beyond. On 30 December 1985, Gen Duane H. Cassidy, CINCMAC, approved Patterson's "Forward Look" reorganization plan.[3] This plan included the establishment of two SOF wings overseas, one in the Pacific and one in Europe. Additionally, the intricate system of squadrons and detachments dedicated to peacetime search and rescue in the US and abroad was either converted to SOF units or disbanded. Most of these peacetime SAR units had outdated equipment, and host nations or local governments were fulfilling their rescue requirements. On 28 May 1986, the Air Force Council approved the Forward Look Plan.[4] By August, this plan was in the field, and subordinate units began to implement its provisions. With the October passage of the 1987 Defense Authorization Bill, which created USSOCOM, Patterson found that his Forward Look Plan

was in line with congressional intent regarding SOF.

FORWARD LOOK BEGINS THE PROCESS

With the January, 1987 announcement that Headquarters, 23rd AF would move to Hurlburt Field, Forward Look was off and running. Patterson knew that to be accepted by the "SOF Mafia", he had to locate his headquarters at the heart of AF SOF. He could then augment his staff with high-quality special operators who feared they would be lost in the MAC shuffle if they relocated to Scott AFB.

On 1 Feb 1987, the Second Air Division at Hurlburt Field was deactivated, thus eliminating an intermediate headquarters that at times had run counter to 23rd AF desires.[5] On 1 June, USSOCOM was activated at MacDill AFB, Florida, with General James J. Lindsay, USA, Commander in Chief. By 30 July, Patterson had formulated and published his understanding of the new relationships among MAC, USSOCOM, other unified commands, and HQ 23rd AF. Thus, when the flag went up at Hurlburt Field on 1 August 1987, considerable groundwork had already been laid toward establishing 23rd AF as the air component of USSOCOM, the AFSOC.[6]

NO PAIN - NO GAIN

Throughout the remainder of 1987, the painful deactivation and consolidation of non-special operations units assigned to 23rd AF continued. By December, 23rd AF consisted of 14,500 personnel and 320 aircraft assigned to six wings worldwide.[7]

The following March, the 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing was redesignated the 39th SOW, and its squadrons renamed special operations squadrons (SOSs). In May, ARRS squadrons in the United Kingdom were redesignated SOSs. This process continued on a relentless timetable set forth by Patterson throughout 1988.[8]

TEST AND EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT

The first test for Patterson's concept was an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) conducted from 9 January to 17 February 1989, under the name of Operation JAGUAR BITE. The operation was a joint chiefs of staff directed, USSOCOM sponsored, joint exercise which included elements of the US Army 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM) and the 1st and 39th SOWs of the 23rd AF/AFSOC.[9]

It was unprecedented in scope and duration, taking place over a forty day period and encompassing operations from Hurlburt Field to Pope AFB, North Carolina, to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, to the far reaches of Montana and northern Michigan. Overall rating of the most grueling evaluation in SOF history was EXCELLENT. There were some problems in command and control, and in joint coordination, but the ORI resoundedly endorsed Forward Look initiates.

CINCMAC MOVES OUT

CINCMAC made the decision on 25 February 1989 to redesignate the ARRS as the Air Rescue Service (ARS), and to reorganize, rebuild, and

reassign remaining ARS units to MAC. Target date was set for 1 August 1989.[10]

The 353rd SOW was activated at Clark AB, Philippines on 6 April 1989, and plans were firmed up to move the 39th SOW to Europe. On 8 May 1989, the 39th SOW raised its flag at Rhein Main AB, Germany, thus putting into place Forward Look's two OCONUS wings.[11]

As planned by CINCMAC the previous February, on 1 August 1989, HQ ARRS was redesignated HQ ARS, and established under MAC at McClellan AFB, California. Remaining rescue-oriented units were transferred from 23rd AF to MAC under the new ARS. Thus, the vision of an all SOF command formulated in December 1985 by Patterson was finally a reality.[12] On 7 September 1989, Maj Gen Thomas E. Eggers succeeded Patterson. A visionary who was able to look into the future, Patterson would not long be retired before the AFSOC, which he created, would be put to the test under fire in Panama.

THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING: OPERATION JUST CAUSE

As Eggers was assuming command of the 23rd AF/AFSOC, the situation in Panama was steadily worsening. By December, political options for the NCA had all but disappeared, with Manuel Noriega being so bold as to "declare war on the US."

On 17 December, 23rd AF was alerted to prepare for military operations in Panama. The 1st SOW was alerted, and began deploying to intermediate staging bases within 14 hours. The six month work-up period necessary for the Son Tay Raid and Desert One was not required.

Previously developed joint plans were dusted off and put into motion.

Over 500 personnel from 23rd AF/AFSOC participated in Operation JUST CAUSE. The plan called for 27 separate and simultaneous raids, airdrops, or attacks against eleven different locations. The plan was executed almost to the letter. During the campaign, command assigned aircraft flew 1,216 hours and a total of 422 sorties. Noriega was apprehended and transported via a 1st SOW MC-130E Combat Talon to the US on 3 January 1990.[13] Problems identified by The Holloway Commission Report and again encountered during URGENT FURY were almost non-existent. The health of the 23rd AF/AFSOC had been validated in combat.

GENERAL LINDSAY GAINS AN AIR COMPONENT

Although 23rd AF was still operating under the statement of understanding issued by Patterson in 1987, and Forward Look had continued as planned, Gen Lindsay and his staff felt somewhat awkward in many of its dealings with its air component. As an example, administrative command still rested with MAC, and all 23rd AF/AFSOC efficiency reports and unit evaluations were routed through the MAC chain of command, thus eliminating input by Lindsay regarding an officer's career progression. On 28 February 1989, Maj Gen Hugh L. Cox, III, USAF, Deputy Commander in Chief, USSOCOM, initiated action within the USSOCOM staff to develop a plan to stand up the AFSOC as a Separate Operating Agency or as a MAJCOM.[14]

Lindsay, after recommendations from his staff, requested in his 16 March 1990 letter to Gen Larry D. Welch , Chief of Staff, Air Force, that

the 23rd AF be stood up as a MAJCOM.[15] On 23 April 1990, Welch agreed to Lindsay's proposal in his 16 March letter, and provided an outline to achieve MAJCOM status of 23rd AF.[16] Lindsay agreed with Welch's outline, and conveyed his acceptance of the Air Force proposal on 24 April 1990.[17] On 22 May 1990, 23rd AF was redesignated AFSOC, which was designated as an Air Force MAJCOM. Eggers continued in command and assumed the duties as commander of the new Air Force MAJCOM, reporting directly to the Chief of Staff, USAF. He also remained responsible to CINCSOC as the air component commander of the unified command.[18] The new MAJCOM still depended on MAC for base support and for training of aircrew personnel in several of its weapon systems. These issues, and others, were put on hold for a one year moratorium, so that the new command could develop the ability to absorb these functions into its operations.

Lindsay and USSOCOM had gotten what it wanted: a component command free from the large bureaucracy of MAC. As for the AFSOC, its status had been institutionalized within the Air Force as a MAJCOM, with its primary focus on SOF.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER V

1. Schweikart, p. 6.

2. Ibid.

3. Chronology, p. 70.

4. Ibid., p. 71.

5. Ibid., p. 72.

6. Ibid., p. 73.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 74.

9. United States Air Force/23rd AF, News Release No. 89-1-8, Public Affairs Division, Hurlburt Field, Florida, p. 30.

10. Chronology, pp. 75-76.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 77.

13. Ibid., p. 78.

14. Hugh L. Cox, III, Maj Gen, USAF, DEPCINCSOC, letter to his staff, 28 February 1990, pp. 80. (See Appendix 2, this publication.)

15. James A. Lindsay, GEN, CINCSOC, letter to Gen Larry D. Welch, CS, USAF, 16 March 1990, p. 82. (See Appendix 2, this publication.)

16. Larry D. Welch, Gen, USAF, CS, to GEN James A. Lindsay, CINCSOC, 23 April 1990, pp. 83. (See Appendix 2, this publication.)

17. James A. Lindsay, GEN, CINCSOC, letter to Gen Larry D. Welch, CS, USAF, 24 April 1990, p. 85. (See Appendix 2, this publication.)

18. Chronology, p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

PROUD OF THE PAST - POISED FOR THE FUTURE

Although 22 May 1990 represented the most significant event in modern Air Force SOF history, it marked the beginning of a new era of even greater challenge. Today's AFSOC is composed of over 5,600 people, approximately 25% of whom are stationed overseas. The three operational SOF wings fly 117 aircraft, which include five different types and 12 different models. Seven formal schools train AFSOC crews to fly the sophisticated special operations aircraft. In addition to active duty forces, the AFSOC is also supported by Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard assets, which provide an additional 20% of the command's force structure.[1]

The transition from numbered Air Force to MAJCOM did not occur overnight and without significant individual effort. Critical command functions, including Comptroller (AC), Civil Engineering (CE), Personnel (DP), Information Management (IM), and Inspection (IG), had to be created while real world operations continued. Maj Gen Eggers and his staff, through dedication to the AFSOC mission, have been able to accomplish exceptional feats in their short first year of existence.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Eleven years have passed since our failure at Desert One. Literally thousands of books and articles have been written about SOF's peacetime

capabilities and its utility across the spectrum of conflict, from LIC to general war. SOF expenditures total less than one percent of the defense budget; this capability is an inexpensive way of maintaining one aspect of our national defense.[2]

In an ever interdependent world, the US will become involved in conflict, whether the President intends to be involved or not, whenever:

> -American citizens are assaulted, killed or held hostage.
> -A representative democracy, respectful of human rights, faces violent extinction, or such a government might emerge from ongoing violence.
> -American economic holdings are seriously threatened, or the regional climate of investment is severely impaired.
> -Conflict causes a considerable flow of refugees to the US.
> -Conflict facilitates international criminals preying upon US citizens, as in cocaine trafficing.
> -Conflict engages significant geostrategic imperatives, such as access to fuels or raw materials, protection of sea or air lines of communications, or denial of military bases to the USSR or its proxies.[3]

A trained and ready force is essential to counteract these threats. As the air component of USSOCOM, the AFSOC is ready to support the NCA when any of these situations arise.

UNIQUE RISKS INVOLVED

Recognized by Clausewitz as the "fog of war", unforeseen events take place during any military operation that represent freak occurrences, no matter how scientifically planned and executed. Special operations many times involve unique risks which include:

(1) <u>You only get one try.</u> You must do it right the first time.[4]

(2) <u>A major failure during any phase can kill the operation.</u> Complex special operations almost always run the danger of creating a sequence of

events that could kill its success.[5]

(3) Special operations mean special rules, and special rules mean special risks. Most special operations are conducted after all political and conventional means have been exhausted. Sometimes, untested and unproven ideas and concepts have to be employed for mission success.[6]

(4) Training isn't enough. No amount of training can substitute for actual wartime experiences. Only under actual combat will the true leader emerge and flourish.[7]

(5) Equipment isn't enough. Equipment will fail, no matter how well it is maintained. More equipment for an operation requires more support, and thus more complexity.[8]

REMEMBER THE PAST

Air Commandos of World War II and Vietnam did not hatch: they were created by visionaries who saw a need and set about to create a capability to fulfill that need. Gen Arnold boldly envisioned a fighting composite force that was structured to meet the challenges of the CBI Theater of Operations. Cochran and Alison took Arnold's lead and created a force that worked autonomously, was self-sufficient, and cut across organizational lines.[9] The resultant force accomplished feats unmatched even today.

In the 1960s, air commandos were again called upon to serve their nation. Before sound military strategy and doctrine could be developed, the commandos found themselves embroiled in Vietnam. From that point on, SOF's modus operandi within Southeast Asia was tailored for general

purpose employment.[10] The many lessons of SAWC include the importance of doctrine, the requirement for flexibility in operations, the value of Mobile Training Teams when employed in Third World nations, and the benefits of civic action programs.[11]

The Holloway Commission Report provides recommendations to improve SOF so that another Desert One does not occur. The AFSOC is part of the cure. As the air component of USSOCOM, it provides a trained and ready force capable of executing its mission whenever called upon.

THE CHALLENGE

As the Iraq war comes to an end, there are constant reminders of just how tenuous peace really is. In the world of the special operator, there is no peace. There are challenges just over the horizon that even our best strategic visionaries cannot predict.

The tremendous success SOF has achieved in the past can be linked to the extraordinary personnel who have worn the proud titles of air commandos and special operators. The challenge is to carry on that tradition. The AFSOC is the beginning from which to build the national resource the American public truly deserves.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER VI

1. Preceeding data taken from AFSOC Command Briefing provided to author by XP staff.

2. R. Lynn Rylander, "Special Operations Forces After the Rise," Military Review, February 1989, p. 87.

3. Paul F. Gorman, GEN (Ret), Statement for the Senate Armed Services Committee on National Strategy and Low-Intensity Conflict, p. 65.

4. Scott, p. 30.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Van Wagner, p. 103.

10. Gleason, p. 50.

11. Dean, p. 56.

APPENDIX 1
CHRONOLOGY

OF THE

TWENTY-THIRD AIR FORCE & AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

1983 - 1990

1 Jan 83 — The United States Mission Control Center (USMCC) of the International Search and Rescue Satellite (SARSAT) System, which was collocated with the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) at Scott Air Force Base (AFB), Illinois, assumed 24-hour test operations. Thereafter, worldwide satellite data for emergency electronic transmission was recorded at the USMCC for actions by appropriate rescue agencies.

1 Mar 83 — The Twenty-Third Air Force (23 AF) was activated at Scott AFB, Illinois, and Major General William J. Mall, Jr., assumed command. This new numbered air force was charged with the worldwide missions of combat rescue, special operations, weather reconnaissance and aerial sampling, security support for intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) sites, training of USAF helicopter and HC-130 crewmen, and pararescue training. Major subordinate units were ARRS and the Second Air Division (2 AD). Hurlburt Field, Florida, became a responsibility of the Twenty-Third Air Force. The Twenty-Third Air Force was initially assigned a total of 7,976 personnel and 336 aircraft. Brigadier General Philip S. Prince became Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Commander, and Colonel Hugh L. Cox assumed command of the newly activated Second Air Division.

1 May 83 - 1 Dec 83 — The Twenty-Third Air Force was tasked through USAF and Military Airlift Command (MAC), by the Vice President's South Florida Task Force on Organized Crime to participate in Operation Bahamas and Turks (BAT). Two H-1s and aircrews from the 20th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) were deployed to the Bahamas to cooperate with the Bahamian police to apprehend aircraft and aircrew engaging in drug trafficking. Aircraft and aircrews rotated periodically to and from the Bahamas as this tasking continued. By 31 December 1983 Operation BAT aircraft had flown 959 sorties and 964 flying hours. Cocaine worth an estimated $63 million and marijuana worth an

estimated $132 million was seized. Operation BAT continued until 30 September 1987.

1-7 Sep 83 — An HC-130 from the 33d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron participated in a search and rescue mission for Korean Air Lines flight 007. The HC-130 was closely monitored by Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) aircraft. It was later determined that a USSR fighter aircraft shot down the airliner near Sakhalin Island. A total of 269 persons perished, including 35 Americans.

24-25 Sep 83 — The Twenty-Third Air Force units shepherded a crash-damaged C-5 (Pacer Gordo Phoenix II) during a one-time flight from Shemya, Alaska, to Dobbins AFB, Georgia. Six WC-130s and two HC-130s preceded and monitored the C-5s flight to the Lockheed support facility.

1 Oct 83 — The Special Operations Test and Evaluation Center (SMOTEC) was established at Hurlburt Field, Florida, and assigned directly to MAC. The Second Air Division commander served concurrently as the SMOTEC commander.

The 1606th Air Base Wing (ABW) at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, was assigned to the Twenty-Third Air Force. The 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing (ARRW), 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing (RWRW), and 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing (ATTW) were relieved from Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service and assigned directly to the Twenty-Third Air Force. The mission of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service was limited to rescue coordination through the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and United States Mission Control Center at Scott AFB, Illinois. General Thomas Ryan, Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command (CINCMAC), and Major General William Mall, Twenty-Third Air Force Commander, approved these organizational changes in order to simplify command relationships. Colonel Owen A. Heeter became Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Commander, and Brigadier General Philip S. Prince became Twenty-Third Air Force Vice Commander.

2 Oct 83 — UH-1 aircrews from Detachment 1, 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, saved 20 persons from flooded areas of the Santa Cruz River near Tucson.

3 Oct 83 — The Honorable Paul Thayer, Deputy Secretary of Defense, called for a revitalization of special operations forces "as a matter of national urgency." Special operations force enhancements were to be fully implemented by fiscal year 1990.

In accordance with a memorandum from the Honorable Paul Thayer, Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Military Airlift Command and the Twenty-Third Air Force aided in the preparation of a Department of Defense (DOD) Special Operations Master Plan which was scheduled to be fully implemented by the 1990s.

25-31 Oct 83 — The Twenty-Third Air Force participated with other forces in the rescue operations to Grenada. The Twenty-Third Air Force furnished MC-130s, AC-130s, and an EC-130 aircraft and their aircrews. Operations centered at Point Salines, Grenada. General Mall was aboard the first MC-130 which penetrated the airspace at Point Salines on the morning of 25 October 1983.

30 Oct 83 — CH-3 aircrews from the 302d Special Operations Squadron, Air Force Reserve (AFRES), saved 47 persons from flooded areas along the Gila River near Maricopa, Arizona.

1 Jan 84 — Responsibilities of the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing (AAW), and Scott AFB were assigned to the Twenty-Third Air Force. The missions of aeromedical evacuation and operational support airlift were added to the other missions of the Twenty-Third Air Force. Total personnel assigned to the Twenty-Third Air Force exceeded 14,000.

18 Mar 84 — General Charles A. Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff, approved the USAF Special Operations Plan.

20 Mar 84 — Air Force Council scaled back the projected HH-60D program from 155 to 99 aircraft. These were the only new aircraft programmed for the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service mission.

4 Apr 84 — Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr approved the USAF Special Operations Plan.

6 Apr 84 — The first C-21A aircraft was accepted by the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing on a contractual basis. It was the first of 80 Learjet aircraft to be delivered to the Air Force as replacements for

aging CT-39 aircraft.

11 Apr 84 — The Beech Aircraft Corporation delivered the first C-12F and it was accepted by the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing on a contractual basis. A total of 40 new C-12F aircraft were scheduled for delivery to the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing as replacements for the 101 aging CT-39 aircraft used for operational support airlift.

15 May 84 — The 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing was redesignated the 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing (CCTW).

22 May 84 — General Charles A. Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff, and General John A. Wickam, USA Chief of Staff, signed a Memorandum of Agreement. Initiative #17 of this agreement stated that the Air Force would transfer responsibility for providing rotary-wing support for special operations forces (SOF) to the United States Army.

1 Jun 84 — Technical Sergeant (later Master Sergeant) John T. Connell, Jr., 33d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, was selected as one of the Twelve Air Force Outstanding Airmen of the Air Force.

1 Jul 84 — The 1550th Avionics Maintenance Squadron was activated at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

The 1723d Combat Control Squadron was activated at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

2 Jul 84 - 23 Aug 85 — Brigadier General Richard J. Trzaskoma served as Twenty-Third Air Force Vice Commander.

30 Jul 84 — Detachment 1, 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, was inactivated. This was the first Twenty-Third Air Force detachment inactivated as a result of the phase-out of Titan II intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

3 Aug 84 — General Charles A. Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff, awarded the Cheney Award for 1983 posthumously to Staff Sergeant Jeffrey Y. Jones.

2-3 Sep 84 — Rescue units, including the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and the 377th Medical Company (USA), logged 148 Saves in Korea during flood relief operations.

c. 20 Sep 84	The Air Force Association awarded the Lieutenant General William H. Tunner Award to the AC-130 aircrew commanded by Major Clement W. Twiford for superior airmanship during the Grenada Contingency.
18-20 Oct 84	Air Force Rescue Coordination Center coordinated search and rescue missions resulting in 47 Saves during conditions of heavy snow, low temperatures, and high winds in Colorado and New Mexico.
3 Dec 84	A conference was held in Washington, D.C., involving General Wickam, General Gabriel, Congressman Earl Hutto, and Congressman Dan Daniel. Following this meeting, plans to transfer HH-53H aircraft from the Air Force to the Army were temporarily suspended.
Jan 85	In response to a request by General Thomas M. Ryan, Jr., CINCMAC, the USAF Scientific Advisory Board began studying possible enhancements for USAF special operations forces.
Jan-Oct 85	The Air Force Inspection and Safety Center conducted a Follow-Up Functional Management Inspection concerning USAF special operations matters.
1 Jan 85	The 1606th Supply Squadron was inactivated at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.
1 Feb 85	Detachment 5, 1400th Military Airlift Squadron (MAS), was activated at Nellis AFB, Nevada.
15 Feb 85	Vice President George Bush personally congratulated Major General William J. Mall, Twenty-Third Air Force Commander, for contributions by the Air Force to Operation BAT, concerning interdiction of illicit drugs.
11-13 Mar 85	At a symposium held at the Air University, Mr Noel C. Koch (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs) challenged Air Force senior leaders to enhance special operations forces. Brigadier General Richard J. Trzaskoma was the senior representative of the Twenty-Third Air Force at this meeting.
Apr 85	Due to budget cuts, a slippage occurred in procurement of HH-60 aircraft. All procurement

funds for the CV-22 aircraft were deleted, but research and development funds were retained. The HH-53 Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) was stretched out, and estimated completion was to occur in 1990.

1 Apr 85 — The 303d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (AFRES) was designated 303d Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS) and reassigned as a gained unit of the Twenty-Second Air Force. The 303d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron had augmented Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service since 1956, and later the Twenty-Third Air Force since 1983.

1 Jun 85 — Military Airlift Command Tiger Team formed. Original charter was to pull together all special operations forces issues and provide direction and focus. However, highest ranking member was lieutenant colonel (O-5), so the team could only coordinate.

1 Jul 85 — United States Air Force Medical Center Scott was assigned to the Twenty-Third Air Force.

9 Jul 85 — General Charles Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff, awarded the Koren Kolligan Trophy to Captain John F. Kelly in recognition of superior airmanship displayed on 14 November 1984.

11 Jul 85 — General Charles A. Gabriel, USAF Chief of Staff, awarded Lieutenant Colonel James L. Hobson, Jr., the Mackay Trophy for 1984 in recognition of his performance during the Grenada Contingency.

18 Jul 85 — A separate Special Operations Forces Panel was established with the Air Force Board structure, Headquarters (HQ) USAF.

Aug 85 — Representative Dan Daniel, in apparent frustration with a perceived lack of action by Department of Defense, proposed a "Sixth Service" to handle special operations matters.

Deputy Secretary of Defense William H. Taft IV, signed a memorandum authorizing the upgrading of ten more CH/HH-53s to become Pave Low III H-53s.

11 Aug 85 — The Air Force Council eliminated the HH-60A program, which had been planned as follow-on source for combat rescue aircraft. Thus, the future of the Air Force combat rescue mission remained in doubt. Only one prototype HH-60A

remained for testing and possible development.

4 Sep 85 — Defense Resources Board (DRB) issued a Program Review Decision (PRD) concerning "long-range" rotary-wing support. The United States Army would accelerate the development of the MH-60 but would curtail the rate of development of the MH-47. The United States Air Force would retain the mission of long-range rotary-wing support and modify more HH-53Hs to the Pave Low III (Enhanced) configuration.

20 Sep 85 — Major General Robert B. Patterson became the Twenty-Third Air Force Commander, succeeding Major General William J. Mall, Jr.

25 Sep 85 - 30 Mar 86 — Colonel Rolland F. Clarkson, Jr., served as Vice Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

1 Oct 85 — Detachment 1, 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, was inactivated and the 48th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was concurrently activated at Homestead AFB, Florida.

15 Oct 85 — Western Pacific Rescue Coordination Center coordinated a mission resulting in 67 Saves following the sinking of the ferry boat **Marcos Faberas** north of Luzon, Republic of the Philippines.

4 Nov 85 — Air Force Rescue Coordination Center coordinated missions resulting in 47 Saves during flood relief operations in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

12 Dec 85 — The last T-39 operational support airlift flight took place, between Scott AFB and Park College in Cahokia, Illinois.

18 Dec 85 — Western Pacific Rescue Coordination Center coordinated a mission resulting in 78 Saves due to the sinking of the **Asuncion Cinco** near Lubang, Republic of the Philippines.

30 Dec 85 — General Duane H. Cassidy, CINCMAC, approved the "Forward Look" reorganization plan for the Twenty-Third Air Force.

25 Feb 86 — Following a disputed election in the Republic of the Philippines, the 31st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron flew five H-3s to the presidential palace in Manila and evacuated President Ferdinand Marcos and 51 other persons

from the palace to Clark Air Base (AB). In addition, 15 other persons were evacuated from the US Embassy in Manila to Clark AB. Subsequently, President Marcos and his family were flown to Guam in a C-9, thence to Hickam AFB, Hawaii, in a C-141. Other assistance during the evacuation was rendered by the 1st Special Operations Squadron and Operating Location B, Detachment 3, 23d Air Force Combat Operations Staff (AFCOS).

31 Mar 86 - 12 Jul 87 — Brigadier General Floyd E. Hargrove served as Vice Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

May 86 — Senior Master Sergeant Michael I. Lampe, Detachment 4, Numbered Air Force Combat Operations Staff (NAFCOS) (23 AF), was chosen as one of the Twelve Most Outstanding Airmen in the Air Force for 1986.

28 May 86 — Air Force Council approved the Forward Look Plan.

7 Jul 86 — Congress passed new legislation on a key provision of the Gramm-Rudman law reaffirming budget cuts totalling $11.7 billion.

16 Aug 86 — General Robert B. Patterson circulated a concise statement on Forward Look to his subordinate units so that everyone could "march to the same drumbeat."

30 Sep 86 — The Air Force purchased 120 operational support airlift aircraft, 88 C-21s and 40 C-12s. These aircraft had been leased by the Air Force since 1984.

Oct 86 — Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act.

Congress completed the comprehensive appropriation bill for fiscal year 1987 cutting the overall defense allocation from a requested $320 billion to $290 billion. An amendment to this bill (which in effect amended the Goldwater-Nichols DOD reorganization), created a new unified US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

16 Oct 86 — The President signed the legislation which would create a new unified US Special Operations Command.

5 Jan 87 — The Air Force announced its response to the budget cuts. As a part of this statement, the Office of

the Secretary of the Air Force, Public Affairs, announced that the Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force would move from Scott AFB, Illinois, to Hurlburt Field, Florida, in mid-1987.

1 Feb 87 — The Second Air Division, Hurlburt Field, Florida, and Detachment 1, Second Air Division, Howard AFB, Panama, inactivated. Detachment 1, 1st Special Operations Wing (SOW), Howard AFB, Panama, was activated. Operating Location H was activated at Hurlburt Field, Florida, as a holding organization for the buildup of Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force in Florida.

12 Mar 87 — General James J. Lindsay, USA, was named Executive Agent for US Special Operations Command.

17 Mar 87 — General Cassidy, CINCMAC, approved the idea of saving the pararescue (PJ) function and its personnel, threatened by significant manpower cuts.

16 Apr 87 — The unified US Special Operations Command was established.

13 May 87 — Headquarters USSOCOM held its first USSOCOM Component Commanders' Conference at MacDill AFB, Florida. General James J. Lindsay, USA, Commander in Chief, presided.

1 Jun 87 — The activation ceremony for US Special Operations Command was held at MacDill AFB, Florida, and the USSOCOM Washington Office was established under the direction of Brigadier General W. A. Downing, Jr., USA.

1 Jul 87 — Detachment 2, 67th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany, was inactivated relieving Twenty-Third Air Force of the mission of operational support airlift in Germany. The UH-1N aircraft and personnel of Detachment 2 were reassigned to the 58th Military Airlift Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany.

13 Jul 87 - 22 Jun 89 — Colonel (later Brigadier General) Hanson L. Scott served as Vice Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

30 Jul 87 — General Robert B. Patterson issued a statement concerning his understanding of the new relationships among MAC, USSOCOM, the other unified commands, and Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force. This became the most definite

directive concerning command relationships issued by Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force during 1987. The Air Force component of USSOCOM was informally designated as the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

31 Jul 87 — Flag-lowering ceremony for Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force at Scott AFB, Illinois.

1 Aug 87 — Flag-raising ceremony and opening ceremony for Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Dining Out was held that evening in honor of the headquarters relocation.

The 1730th Pararescue Squadron (PRS) activated at Eglin AFB, Florida.

Sep 87 — Fifty-Fourth Weather Reconnaissance Squadron won the Verne Orr Award of the Air Force Association for 1986.

22-24 Sep 87 — Second Component Commanders' Conference held at Headquarters USSOCOM.

30 Sep 87 — Fifty-Fourth Weather Reconnaissance Squadron was inactivated at Andersen AFB, Guam. The 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and 41st Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron were inactivated at McClellan AFB, California.

1 Oct 87 — The 1720th Special Tactics Group (STGP) was designated and activated at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The 1723d Combat Control Squadron (CCS), 1724th Special Tactics Squadron (STSQ), and 1730th Pararescue Squadron were all assigned to the 1720th Special Tactics Group.

30 Nov 87 - 31 Dec 87 — Fortieth Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah, and its five remaining detachments were all inactivated. The personnel and aircraft of one of the detachments (Det 24), were reorganized as Detachment 24, 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Fairchild AFB, Washington.

9 Dec 87 — Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force was awarded an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 January 1985 through 31 December 1986.

31 Dec 87 — Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force was authorized 14,500 personnel and 320 aircraft. The command was assigned six wings and six other direct

reporting units.

1 Jan 88 — Detachment 1, 1st Special Operations Wing, Howard AFB, Panama, was inactivated.

19 Jan 88 — Major General Robert B. Patterson, Commander Headquarters Twenty-Third Air Force, was awarded the Order of the Bayonet by the security police.

1 Mar 88 — Thirty-Ninth Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing was redesignated 39th Special Operations Wing, the 55th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was redesignated 55th Special Operations Squadron, and the 9th Special Operations Squadron was activated. All units were located at Eglin AFB, Florida.

May 88 — Technical Sergeant Glenn Palmer, 1724th Special Tactics Squadron, was selected as one of the Twelve Outstanding Airmen of the Air Force for 1988.

1 May 88 — Detachment 14, 67th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, was inactivated and 56th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was activated at Keflavik Naval Installation, Iceland. Twenty-First Special Operations Squadron was activated at Royal Air Force (RAF) Woodbridge, United Kingdom.

1 Jun 88 — Sixty-Seventh Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was redesignated 67th Special Operations Squadron, and 667th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (CAMS) was activated at RAF Woodbridge, United Kingdom.

13 Jul 88 — Ambassador Charles S. Whitehouse was confirmed by the US Senate as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC). He assumed duties previously performed on an interim basis by John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary of the Army.

20 Aug 88 — Record flight of two MH-60G aircraft, 55th Special Operations Squadron, from Antigua to Eglin AFB, Florida, a distance of 1,640 nautical miles, in 11.1 hours with six aerial refuelings in transit.

30 Sep 88 — Detachment 9, 67th Special Operations Squadron, inactivated at Zaragoza AB, Spain

29 Sep - 3 Oct 88 — Twenty-Third Air Force provided [illegible]up emergency rescue support for Space Transportation System (STS) 26. Six pararescue teams were deployed at

worldwide locations. This was the first space shuttle flight since 1986.

1 Oct 88 — Detachment 1, 1467th Facility Checking Squadron (FCS), inactivated at Yokota AB, Japan.

United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) assumed operational command of all MAC strategic and tactical airlift aircraft.

Both MAC and Twenty-Third Air Force completed fiscal year 1988 without any Class A aircraft mishaps.

2 Oct 88 — General James [illegible]say, CINCUSSOCOM, stated that USSOCOM would formulate a separate Program Objectives Memorandum (POM) for 1992-1997. This indicated that US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, and USSOCOM would all be submitting separate requirements to the DOD.

1 Dec 88 — Blinking Light missions in Central America end for 16th Special Operations Squadron.

14 Jan 89 — Elements of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 67th Special Operations Squadron, 56th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, and 1730th Pararescue Squadron, together with maintenance support from 667th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, rescued 32 persons from the Yarromonga, a distressed Cypriot cargo vessel, located 360 nautical miles northwest of Shannon, Ireland.

18 Jan 89 - 21 Feb 89 — Units of the 1st Special Operations Wing and 39th Special Operations Wing were rated Excellent during an Operational Readiness Inspection connected with Exercise Jaguar Bite.

24 Jan 89 — Deputy Secretary William H. Taft IV, authorized the United States Special Operations Command to develop a separate Program Objectives Memorandum, beginning in fiscal year 1992. This meant that United States Special Operations Command would budget independent of the Army, Navy, and Air Force budget submissions to the Department of Defense.

25 Feb 89 — General Duane Cassidy, CINCMAC, decided that the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service would eventually become the Air Rescue Service (ARS) and would be reorganized, rebuilt, and reassigned

directly to MAC. The tentative date for this change was 1 August 1989.

1 Mar 89 — Detachment 15, 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing, was inactivated at Patrick AFB, Florida, and the 41st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (later 41st Air Rescue Squadron), was concurrently activated at Patrick AFB. The primary mission of this squadron was support of manned space flights.

1 Apr 89 — Fifty-Sixth Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (later 56th Air Rescue Squadron), Keflavik, Iceland, was reassigned from 39th Special Operations Wing to the 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing.

6 Apr 89 — Three Fifty-Third Special Operations Wing was activated at Clark AB, Republic of Philippines. The following squadrons were assigned: 1st Special Operations Squadron, 31st Special Operations Squadron, and 353d Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

10 Apr 89 — The 1606th Mission Support Squadron was designated and activated at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico.

18 Apr 89 — As the Headquarters 39th Special Operations Wing prepared to move to Europe, the 55th Special Operations Squadron, 9th Special Operations Squadron, and 655th Consolidated Maintenance Squadron were reassigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing.

25 Apr 89 — Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney announced his recommendation to cancel the CV-22 Program effective during fiscal year 1990 as an economy measure. The CV-22 was a combined fixed wing/rotary wing aircraft which has been planned for use in special operations.

5-8 May 89 — Headquarters 39th Special Operations Wing lowered its flag at Eglin AFB, Florida, on 5 May 1989 and raised the flag at Rhein-Main AB, Germany, on 8 May 1989.

1 Jun 89 — All active Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons were redesignated Air Rescue Squadrons.

All Detachments of Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons became Detachments of Air Rescue Squadrons.

23 Jun 89 - 23 Feb 90 — Colonel (later Brigadier General) James L. Hobson, Jr., served as Vice Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

30 Jun 89 — Thirteen Forty-Fifth Student Squadron was inactivated at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

1 Aug 89 — Headquarters Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service was redesignated Headquarters Air Rescue Service (ARS) and was reassigned from the Twenty-Third Air Force to MAC.

Headquarters Air Rescue Service moved, minus personnel and equipment, from Scott AFB, Illinois, to McClellan AFB, California.

Headquarters 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing was inactivated at McClellan AFB, California, and its personnel, equipment, and units were assigned to the Air Rescue Service.

The following squadrons were reassigned from the 41st Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing to the Air Rescue Service:

33d Air Rescue Squadron, Kadena AB, Japan
37th Air Rescue Squadron, F. E. Warren AFB, Wyoming
38th Air Rescue Squadron, Osan AB, Korea
41st Air Rescue Squadron, Patrick AFB, Florida
56th Air Rescue Squadron, Keflavik Naval Installation, Iceland
71st Air Rescue Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
53d Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Keesler AFB, Mississippi
55th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, McClellan AFB, California

Detachment 2 (the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center), Headquarters Air Rescue Service, was activated at Scott AFB, Illinois.

1 Aug 89 — Seventeen Thirtieth Pararescue Squadron moved, minus personnel and equipment, from Eglin AFB, Florida, to McClellan AFB, California, and was reassigned from the 1720th Special Tactics Group to the Air Rescue Service.

Seventeenth Special Operations Squadron was activated at Kadena AB, Japan, and assigned to the 353d Special Operations Wing.

9 Aug - 20 Aug 89 — Twenty-Third Air Force was tasked to perform a search and rescue mission to locate Congressman Mickey Leland and his party of 15 other persons after their aircraft was reported overdue during a flight in Ethiopia. Other forces of the US and Ethiopia were involved in the search effort. Five HC-130s and four MH-60Gs flew 460 hours. The crash site was located, but there were no survivors.

1 Sep 89 — Ninth Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron moved from Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines, to Yokota AB, Japan.

7 Sep 89 — Major General Thomas E. Eggers succeeded Major General Robert B. Patterson as Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

17 Dec 89 - 3 Jan 90 — About 500 personnel of the Twenty-Third Air Force and associated forces participated with other elements of the US Army, Navy, and Air Force in Operation JUST CAUSE, an action against Panamanian forces controlled by General Manuel Noriega. The plan called for 27 separate and simultaneous raids, airdrops, or attacks against eleven different locations. H-Hour was at 0045 Panama local time on 20 December 1989. The following aircraft were involved: three MC-130E, 8th Special Operations Squadron; five MH-53J, 20th Special Operations Squadron; two AC-130A, 711th Special Operations Squadron, AFRES; seven AC-130H, 16th Special Operations Squadron; four MH-60G, 55th Special Operations Squadron; three HC-130P/N, 9th Special Operations Squadron; three HC-130P/N, 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing; two EC-130E, 193d Special Operations Squadron, ANG. These aircraft flew 1,216.2 flying hours and a total of 422 sorties, with only one air abort. No aircraft suffered serious damage and there were no fatalities or combat-related injuries to any Air Force personnel. General Noriega was transported to the United States aboard a MC-130E aircraft of the 8th Special Operations Squadron on 3 January 1990.

1 Feb 90 — Three Seventy-Fifth Aeromedical Airlift Wing, USAF Medical Center, Scott AFB, and all other responsibilities concerning Scott AFB, Illinois,

were reassigned from the Twenty-Third Air Force to the Twenty-Second Air Force. Functions of aeromedical airlift, operational support airlift, flight control, and base support functions at Scott AFB, were no longer responsibilities of the Twenty-Third Air Force.

1 Mar 90 - Colonel (later Brigadier General) Dale E. Stovall served as Vice Commander, Twenty-Third Air Force.

21 May 90 The 834th Combat Support Group, Hurlburt Field, Florida, previously assigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing, was redesignated the 834th Air Base Wing. This wing was reassigned from the Twenty-Third Air Force to the Twenty-First Air Force of MAC.

The 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing and 1606th Air Base Wing, both at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, were assigned from the Twenty-Third Air Force to the Twenty-Second Air Force of MAC.

22 May 90 The Twenty-Third Air Force was redesignated the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), which was designated as a major air command (MAJCOM) of the United States Air Force. Major General Thomas E. Eggers continued in command and assumed duties as the commander of a major air command, responsible to the Chief of Staff, USAF. General Eggers also remained responsible to the Commander in Chief, USSOCOM, as a service component commander of this unified command. A new AFSOC emblem was approved and a new flag was manufactured and displayed at the redesignation ceremony on 22 May 1990.

APPENDIX 2

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33608-6001

28 February 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: SOCS
SOJ5
SOJ8

SUBJECT: AFSOC as a Separate Operating Agency/MAJCOM

1. Objectives of standing up AFSOC as a Separate Operating Agency/MAJCOM.

a. Formal recognition that the command line flows from SOCOM to AFSOC to AFSOF Operational Units (in CONUS).

(1) Since SOCOM was formed, MAC has continued to function as if a command line continued to exist from MAC to the AFSOC. This is the root cause of the problems that have plagued SOCOM since its inception. Resolution of many of these problems were only effected when they were escalated to the CINC level. The AF and many of its commands are confused by a relationship between the AFSOC, SOCOM and MAC that is not stereotypical and they don't understand. Perpetuating this problem is the fact that COMAC writes an OER on COMAFSOC in addition to the separate report rendered by CINCSOC.

(2) This objective should serve to remove doubt as to AFSOC's status as SOCOM's air component so assigned by JCS. The formal recognition should, at a minimum, be marked by a ceremony that stands up the AFSOC as an SOA/MAJCOM attended by appropriate officials of SOCOM, USAF, MAC, JCS, OSD, and the Congress. This ceremony, marking formal recognition, is not in itself sufficient to remove the problems associated with MAC, as an AFSOC supporting command, attempting to exert command and directive authority over the AFSOC. A document delineating the support to be rendered to the AFSOC by MAC on behalf of the USAF must be written and signed by appropriate officers.

b. To stand up the AFSOC as an SOA/MAJCOM reporting to CINCSOC but receiving USAF (service and specialized support) support through MAC.

(1) There are options on how one could achieve this objective. The stereotypical one would be to standup the AFSOC as an USAF Major Command (MAJCOM). That should be an objective but may not be achievable in the near term. There would be significant resource requirements to give the AFSOC a stand-alone, MAJCOM capability. A phased approach that would culminate in a MAJCOM would seem to be an appropriate approach.

(2) An SOA could be an approach, but the definition may not fit what SOCOM wants the AFSOC to be.

(3) Whatever description is appropriate to the new AFSOC, appropriate agreements/documents must be written to describe the relationships between the USAF, SOCOM, AFSOC and MAC and must be in sufficient detail so that action officers can use the document to figure out who does what to whom. This is because SOCOM is unique and its air component is unique among the Unified Commands and certainly different from what most AF officers are used to dealing with.

c. Describe the relationships of all concerned for OCONUS AFSOF IAW the applicable legislation (including Goldwater-Nichols) and effectively remove MAC from the role other than supporting, that is now attempts to play as the "owner" of OCONUS SOF.

SOCOM should be the appropriate command that supports the geographical CINCs when issues of AFSOF are addressed for their theaters. Examples are the basing issues that are currently working in PACOM and EUCOM. Those commands should be assisted by SOCOM in these issues, not MAC. The geographical CINCs still look to MAC like they did pre-Goldwater-Nichols as the "stovepipe" command responsible for OCONUS SOF.

2. Our game plan should be aimed toward providing the CINC with options on how to stand-up the AFSOC and what needs to be done to do it, as well as what the implications are. Additionally, he should be provided historical examples of problems with MAC that would not have been such if CINCSOC had a stand-alone AFSOC (example, the EC-130 issue and many others). This could be used by him in his meeting with CSAF the week of 5 March. The game plan itself does not need excruciating detail but the CINC needs the background info that supports the game plan. A point paper should be provided the CINC that he could leave with the CSAF after their talk. The point paper should be very general and state what the CINC wants and some suggested ways to achieve it.

HUGH L COX, III
Major General, USAF
Deputy Commander in Chief

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33608-6001

16 March 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Air Force Major Command Status for Air Force Special Operations Command

1. This is to follow up on our discussions concerning the feasibility of establishing 23 Air Force as a major command (MAJCOM). To provide a basis for further discussions and study, the USSOCOM staff has prepared a conceptual organizational structure as well as a draft outline of a plan of action and milestones, which are attached for your review and consideration. You should note that I have included in the organizational structure an Air Force Special Warfare Foreign Internal Defense (FID) wing as well as SOLL assets.

2. In order to resolve this issue in a timely manner, I agree with your proposal that we form a joint Air Staff-USSOCOM-MAC action team to study this issue and develop a detailed plan of action and milestones. To assist in that project, the USSOCOM staff has prepared a draft Program Action Directive (PAD) as a strawman document.

3. Under the leadership of the CSAF and supported directly by the Air Staff, elevation of the Air Force Special Operations Command to a major command will institutionalize special operations warfare in the Air Force, and serve to focus directly on joint and Service responsibilities.

4. The USSOCOM action team stands ready to assist in this matter at the earliest opportunity. My staff coordinator is Brigadier General Running, USAF, SOJ5, AV 968-3031.

JAMES J. LINDSAY
General, United States Army
Commander in Chief

Encl
as

CF: CINCMAC

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20330
23 April 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

SUBJECT: Air Force Major Command Status for Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) (Corrected Copy--Para. H.)

You proposed the establishment of 23rd Air Force as a major command. I agree and we are prepared to proceed as outlined below:

a. 23rd Air Force becomes AFSOC, a MAJCOM, reporting directly to CSAF and serves as component commander for CINCSOC.

b. AFSOC headquarters will be provided additional capability in programming, budget execution, requirements, personnel and manpower. AFSOC will work directly with and receive assistance from HQ USAF Military Personnel Center and DCS/Programs and Resources on personnel and programming issues.

c. A comptroller and inspector general function will be established at AFSOC.

d. AFSOC will be provided enhanced acquisition capability for special operations forces peculiar equipment, while MAC continues to support common aircraft systems.

e. AFSOC will continue to rely on the MAC worldwide logistic support, transportation, and communications control systems.

f. MAC will provide, to SOCOM standards, initial training support through the 1550th CCTW at Kirtland AFB.

g. Special Mission Operational Test & Evaluation Center (SMOTEC) will report to AFSOC.

h. MAC will continue to host Hurlburt Field.

i. MAC will continue to host Kirtland AFB.

j. AFSOC will be the gaining command for the Air Reserve Component Special Operations Forces.

The Air Staff believes that AFSOC can provide the responsiveness you require with the addition of less than 100 manpower spaces. At a time of increasing pressure to reduce

management structure, this appears to be a prudent course to fix the problem without unnecessary duplication of existing USAF support capabilities.

I recognize there will be some issues that will still need to be resolved in the future. In my view, we are taking a major step with the creation of AFSOC and for now you and I should agree on a one year moratorium on further changes to give the new command a chance to settle down in its operation before facing additional challenges.

If you agree, we are ready to proceed with standing up the new command.

LARRY D. WELCH, General, USAF
Chief of Staff

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33608-6001

SOCC

24 April 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR Chief of Staff, United States Air Force,
Washington, DC 20330-2000

SUBJECT: Air Force Major Command Status for Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)

1. We are extremely pleased to join with you in standing up the USSOCOM Air Force component as a USAF major command (MAJCOM). Your proposal provides the opportunity to begin the process of correcting many difficulties we have faced in carrying out our legislated responsibilities. Further, it ensures that the USSOCOM Air Force component will be directly engaged with you and the Air Staff. As we both recognize, this process will necessarily be evolutionary, changing continually as AFSOC's MAJCOM structure and organizational effectiveness mature.

2. As you rightly observe, the creation of this MAJCOM is a significant step, calling for a prudent, phased approach. The first phase is to stand up the command as you outlined. We agree that a moratorium on further changes is wise, albeit there are issues which will need further attention as we work together to help AFSOC grow. ..

a. Military Airlift Command retention of AFSOC training responsibility, while expedient, is not consistent with the Congressional mandate. However, in the interest of accommodating your agreement on a MAJCOM status for the AFSOC, I agree that MAC can provide AFSOF training at Kirtland in the short term. As the AFSOC matures, it will become capable of absorbing this training responsibility. At the termination of the agreed, one-year moratorium, the major issue to be addressed should be that of AFSOC assuming full SOF initial qualification training responsibility for AFSOF aircrews. Since USSOCOM's PPBS responsibilities come in with the 92-97 POM, we should work toward this transition for FY 1/92.

b. Given the increasing pressure to reduce management structure, the 100 manpower space increase for the stand-up is prudent. Our programmers should remain engaged in reviewing the evolution of AFSOC. Some manpower realignments or growth may well be validated in one or two years to complete the evolution of the command. Naturally, such action would be programmed by USSOCOM in MFP-11, but USAF involvement and assistance will be imperative and appreciated.

3. Streamlining the effectiveness of Air Force Special Operations should pay considerable dividends. My staff is prepared immediately to join with yours to flesh out required documents and actions. I would appreciate your continued support to stand up the AFSOC on 22 May 90.

JAMES L LINDSAY
General, United States Army
Commander in Chief

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