



U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL

FACT SHEET

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USAJFKSWCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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THE SPECIAL FORCES PIPELINE

The Special Forces Qualification Course is recognized as the best special operations training and education in the world. Our mission is to train and build the future operational force with Special Forces warriors who are adaptable, agile and capable to immediately enter into combat operations as a member of a Special Forces team.

The **1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne)** at Fort Bragg, N.C., is responsible for all six phases of Special Forces student training, which is referred to as the Special Forces Pipeline. To accomplish this mission, the group divides the responsibility into several of its battalions. The 1st Battalion is responsible for all field training in the SF Pipeline. The 3rd Battalion conducts language training and the 4th Battalion conducts all military occupational specialty (MOS) training, while the 1st Battalion conducts the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Conditioning Course and the Special Forces Preparation Course.

The **U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Noncommissioned Officer Academy**, or NCOA, is responsible for all Army special operations NCO Education System courses, to include Army Common Leader Training. Enlisted students in the Special Forces Pipeline take courses from the NCOA as required by their NCOES requirements.

The Special Forces Pipeline requires a commitment of 1 year (2 years for 18Ds) of intensive coursework based on the Soldier's military specialty training. A Soldier is awarded the green beret and the Special Forces Tab at the end of all phases of training. The six phases include:

Phase IA – Special Forces Assessment and Selection Conditioning Course

Phase IB – Special Forces Assessment and Selection

*Special Forces Preparation Course

Phase II – Small Unit Tactics/SERE/PG/HD

*Common Leadership Training

Phase III – Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Specific Training

Phase IV – Language Training

Phase V – Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage)

Phase VI – Graduation (Award of the Green Beret and SF tab)

*All enlisted soldiers in the 18X program must attend the Special Forces Preparation Course and those who have not already completed the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) must go to Army Common Leader Training (CLT).

In-Service Special Forces Volunteer Prerequisites:

1. U.S. Citizen
2. Male, enlisted/officer volunteer
3. Volunteer for and complete airborne training
4. Minimum GT score of 110; waivable to 100
5. High school graduate or GED equivalent
6. ENLISTED: Specialist (E-4) through sergeant first class (E-7) / OFFICER: promotable First Lieutenant through Captain
7. Pass the Special Forces physical
8. Pass a 50-meter swim while wearing the Battle Dress Uniform and combat boots (diagnostic given at SFAS, test upon arrival at SFQC): there is a 2-week swim course offered just prior to SFQC if one fails the diagnostic at SFAS...enlisted only (this 2-week prep course is not mandatory)
9. Pass the APFT with a minimum score of 229 points in the 18-21 year old age group
10. Complete Army CLT before they start Phase II

Initial Accessions (18X) Special Forces Prerequisites: Must meet all of the above with the following additions:

1. GT score of 110 or greater (not waivable)
2. Must be a high school graduate
3. Score an 85 or greater on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery exam

Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC)

Phase IA: SFAS Preparation and Conditioning Course (formally known as Special Forces Preparation Course): 25 days

The 1st Battalion conducts this course, which is 25 days of physical fitness and land navigation training designed to prepare students for Phase IB: Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS). Initial accessions Special Forces recruits (18X) attend this training.

Phase IB: Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS): 24 days

Company B, 1st Bn. conducts SFAS training at Camp MacKall, N.C. The SFAS cadre look at nearly 3,000 Special Forces volunteers each year to determine who is suitable for Special Forces training and to determine who is unable to adapt to the Special Forces environment. Candidates attend SFAS in a temporary duty status. Candidates who enter this course find themselves under constant evaluation starting with the day they in-process until the day they out-process.

The SFAS model focuses on student ability and suitability for service in Special Forces. Teaching, coaching, training and mentoring are important aspects of the program. Land navigation is used as a common medium to judge student trainability. A series of 12 attributes linked to success in the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) form the basis for evaluating candidate suitability. These attributes include intelligence, physical fitness, motivation, trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, judgment, decisiveness, teamwork, influence, and communications. Several training events such as a one-mile obstacle course, runs, road marches, team situational exercises and rappelling are also used to evaluate students.

Special Forces Preparation Course: 19 days – Only for 18X

This training is only for initial accessions program Special Forces recruits (18X) who are selected during SFAS to continue training in the Special Forces Pipeline. 1st Battalion also

conducts SFPC, which is 19 days of training in small unit tactics designed to prepare students for Phase II of the SFQC.

Common Leadership Training: 17 Days

This training is for all students who are not graduates of the Primary Leadership Development Course or the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and teaches a variety of Army common Soldier skills and prepares newer recruits to compete with their peers as they enter the SF qualification course.

Phase II: Small Unit Tactics/SERE/PGD/HD: 56 days

Company C of 1st Battalion teaches five modules in Phase II over a 35 day training cycle. Because of the wide diversity of MOSs who volunteer for special forces, each module trains Special Forces candidates on squad level tactics, ODA combat patrols, and supporting warrior skills. Modules four and five are pivotal modules that bridge the gap between the conventional and unconventional warfare mindset and introduces selected special forces core tasks in a time-constrained environment designed to force students to analyze and think in an asymmetrical environment and solve the problem. After the completion of SUT students move on to 19 days of survival and negotiation training. Company D, 1st Bn., conducts the course at Camp MacKall, N.C. The goal of training in survival, evasion, resistance and escape, or SERE, is to teach personnel how to survive if they become separated from their unit; to evade a hostile force and make their way back to friendly forces; and to avoid capture. In the event that Soldiers are captured, SERE training prepares them to resist the enemy's attempts at exploitation, to escape from captivity and to return home with honor. Students will also be trained in Peacetime Governmental Detention/Hostage Detention policy and techniques to include a thorough understanding of the Code of Conduct and abduction avoidance.

Phase III: Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Skill Training 13 Weeks

This phase of training consists of the following courses:

18A Officer Course: 65 days

Company A, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies officers in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an ODA commander. This training consists of general subjects, special operations, Special Forces planning (using the military decision-making process), engineer and weapons training, communications and medical training, special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and counterinsurgency operations.

18B Weapons Sergeant Course: 65 days

Company B, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a weapons sergeant on an SFODA. Students become proficient in a wide variety of small arms, antitank weapons, air defense systems, crew-served weapons, and mortars. The cadre focuses on training students with foreign weapons and equipment. This phase concludes with a light infantry, live-fire training exercise.

18C Engineer Sergeant Course: 65 days

Company B also trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an engineer sergeant on an SFODA. These students learn pre-engineering subjects, field construction techniques, field fortifications, land mine warfare (U.S. and foreign

mines), bridging, engineer reconnaissance, target analysis, and demolitions. This phase culminates with an engineering field training exercise.

18D Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course: 322 days

Special Warfare Medical Group is responsible for all medical training at the USAJFKSWCS. The 230 training-day medical phase of the Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course consists of the 26-week Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) portion and an additional 20-week training cycle that completes the 18D's medical training.

The initial 26-week Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) portion is also attended by enlisted Army personnel from the 75th Ranger Regiment, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) and the Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne). U.S. Navy SEALs and U.S. Navy personnel supporting Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance units as well as selected Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) personnel also attend the SOCM portion.

Upon completion of the SOCM portion, a Soldier is capable of providing basic primary care for his special operations team for up to seven days and is capable of sustaining a combat casualty for up to 72 hours after an injury, as required.

In the Special Operations Combat Medic portion, students receive clinical training in both emergency pre-hospital and hospital settings. This training is conducted during a four-week deployment to one of four major metropolitan areas: Richmond, Va.; Tampa, Fla.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; and Jacksonville, Fla.

The additional 20-week training cycle requires MOS 18D trainees to complete the 26-week SOCM curriculum before continuing on for an additional 20 weeks of specialized training in medical, surgical, dental, veterinary, laboratory, pharmaceutical and preventive medicine subjects. Upon completion of this course students are trained to function as independent health care providers. In addition to the four weeks of clinical training provided during the SOCM portion of their training, MOS 18D students receive another four weeks of clinical experience at selected health care facilities throughout the United States. The focus of this training is on honing student skills as independent, general practice, health care providers.

18E Communications Sergeants Course: 65 days

Company E, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a communications sergeant on an SFODA. The training focuses on long-range communications and deals with the most sophisticated communications equipment in the Army. Students also train on the less sophisticated equipment they may find in foreign countries. Each student gains proficiency in Morse code; basic electronics; antenna theory and construction; cryptography; installation, operation, and maintenance of various high frequency, very high frequency, and ultrahigh frequency outstation radio systems; basic computers; and Special Forces communications techniques and procedures. This phase culminates with a long-range communications exercise conducted at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma.

Specialized Training:

Phase IV: Language Training:

The ability to speak a foreign language is a core unconventional warfare skill and is being incorporated throughout all phases of the qualification course. The students will receive their language assignment after the selection phase when they will receive a language starter kit that allows them to begin language training while waiting to return to Fort Bragg for Phase II. The 3rd Bn, 1st SWTG (A) is responsible for all language training at the USAJFKSWCS. The Basic Military Language Course (BMLC) is primarily a performance-oriented language course. Students are

trained in one of ten core languages with enduring regional application and must show proficiency in speaking, listening and reading. A student receives language training throughout the Pipeline. In Phase IV, students attend an 8 or 12 week language blitz depending upon the language they are slotted in. The general purpose of the course is to provide each student with the ability to communicate in a foreign language. For successful completion of the course, the student must achieve at least a 1/1/1 or higher on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in two of the three graded areas (speaking, listening, and reading). The languages are divided into four categories:

Category 1: Spanish, French, (8 weeks)

Category 2: Indonesian (12 weeks)

Category 3: Persian-Farsi, Polish, Russian, Tagalog*, Thai (24 weeks, 2 days)

Category 4: Arabic, Korean (12 weeks,)

Phase V: Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage): 34 days

Robin Sage is conducted throughout the year by Company E, 1st Battalion at Camp Mackall. Robin Sage is a problem-solving Field Training Exercise (FTX) where students put their knowledge and skills to use as a student SFODA.. Robin Sage. During this unconventional warfare exercise, the students are required to apply the lessons learned from previous months of Special Forces MOS training and field training to include survival and foreign language based scenarios. This exercise involves the students, counterinsurgent and guerrilla personnel (other service members), auxiliary personnel, and cadre. This scenario stresses realism because the student SFODAs must train a mock guerilla force in a hostile environment using civilians in the surrounding community as the auxiliary. This exercise ranges over approximately 50,000 square miles. By the conclusion of Robin Sage, the students have been placed in many situations where they were required to use MOS and leadership skills, and their abilities were tested to work in adverse and ambiguous conditions.

Phase VI: Special Forces Graduation

Admission into the Special Forces Regiment begins the day before graduation at the JFK Plaza on Ardennes Street. The Regimental First Formation is where the graduates meet the leaders of the units they will be assigned to and they are officially welcomed to the SF brotherhood by the honorary SF Regimental commander. The next day, graduation takes place with the awarding of the certificate of graduation, the SF tab and the coveted Yarborough knife.

- *VERITAS ET LIBERTAS* -