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THE STRATEGIC UTILITY OF U.S. NAVY SEALS

by

Erick Peterson

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Thesis Advisor:

Hy Rothstein

Second Reader:

Brian Greenshields

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THE STRATEGIC UTILITY OF U.S. NAVY SEALS

Erick Peterson
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy
B.A., California State University, Long Beach, 1994

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2009

Author: Erick Peterson

Approved by: Hy Rothstein
Thesis Advisor

Brian Greenshields
Second Reader

Gordon McCormick
Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The current insurgency in Iraq has necessitated the overwhelming use of special operations forces (SOF) in operational and tactical roles. With an expected draw down in Iraq, it is time to refocus SOCOM on the strategic utility of SOF, specifically on the Maritime arm of SOCOM, the SEALs. SEALs bring unique capabilities based on their comparative advantage in direct action and their familiarity with the maritime domain. This comparative advantage contributes to their strategic utility as a short duration, direct action force working from land and sea.

The SEAL culture, based on the history of the organization, their recruitment, selection and training, has historically focused on direct action operations. Insistence of indirect action will atrophy the skill sets of these maritime commandos.

Historic research will illustrate successful strategic uses of SEALs in an effort to provide guidelines to decision makers. These decision makers must incorporate a balanced approach to the war, where an over-reaction and over commitment of forces to one mission set will likely imperil, not help, U.S. strategy. The Navy SEALs have an historic and proven comparative advantage in direct action based operations and best serve SOCOM's strategy fulfilling their strategic utility.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current insurgency in Iraq has necessitated the overwhelming use of special operations forces (SOF) in operational and tactical roles. With an expected draw down in Iraq, it is time to refocus SOCOM on the strategic utility of SOF, specifically on the Maritime arm of SOCOM, the SEALs. SEALs bring unique capabilities, based on their comparative advantage in direct action, and their familiarity with maritime domain. This comparative advantage contributes to their strategic utility, as a short duration, and direct action force working from land and sea.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. THESIS OVERVIEW

Since their inception in 1961, Navy Sea Air Land (SEAL) commandos have proven themselves a capable and formidable fighting force. From the actions of the SEALs' forefathers, the Scouts and Raiders in World War II and the UDT (Underwater Demolition Teams) Frogmen of World War II and Korea, to the harrowing and heroic experiences in Vietnam, Grenada and now Afghanistan and Iraq, Navy SEALs have proven successful at engaging and killing the nation's enemies. Today the SEALs are part of a bigger Naval Special Warfare (NSW) community, which includes Special Boat Teams (SBTs) and SEAL Delivery Vehicles (SDV). Since 1987, NSW has fallen under the operational command of Special Operations Command (SOCOM), which has purview over all of the United States' special operations forces (Army Special Forces, Army Civil Affairs, Army Psychological Operations, Army Rangers, Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), Air Force Para-rescuemen, Air Force Combat Controllers, Special Operations Air Force fixed and rotary wing assets, Marine Special Operations Forces and NSW). With these forces all contending for SOCOM's missions, competition is unavoidable. In an effort to remain relevant and competitive for missions, forces have expanded their historic mission sets. In the current battle spaces of Afghanistan and Iraq, the thin line separating the responsibilities of various Special Operations Forces (SOF) has been increasingly blurred. What was once seen as historically Special Forces (SF)

missions (organizing and leading irregular forces and the long-term engagement of these forces) has been taken on by U.S. Navy SEALs. In like manner, Special Forces are routinely conducting missions where SEALs have a comparative advantage, such as direct action raids and enemy snatches. The blurred "division of labor" brings pointed questions as to what missions individual SOF should be doing. The SF historic model of working with local forces fits well in the proposed "by, with, and through" indirect strategy, but does not comfortably mesh with understood strengths of the Navy SEALs.

With the relatively new emphasis on indirect action,¹ SEALs are being called upon more often to conduct indirect action missions. This begs the question, "Is this what they *should* be doing, or are they doing it merely because they *can*?" Or more to the point, *what is the strategic utility of the U.S. Navy SEALs?*

This paper goes into detail on how the factors that surround the SEALs, from culture and training to their operational history, as well as the need for a balanced approach for the U.S. military, defines their strategic utility. The paper also illustrates how using SEALs in the indirect action role, while possible, is not the most efficient or effective use of the force. Based on history,

¹ Indirect action are efforts to enable others to combat a defined enemy (in the GWOT, it is global extremism) by providing training, equipment, transfer of technology and ideas, humanitarian aid to the populace and support to the favored government. Unconventional War (UW) is fought this way; defined as "Operations conducted by, with or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, insurgency, or conventional military operations" (FM 3-05.103).

the SEAL ethos, normative culture and comparative advantage, the SEALs strategic utility is primarily as a direct action unit for SOCOM.

The methodology of this paper employs case studies and interviews with senior NSW personnel. This paper investigates the genesis of the unit, reviews its recruitment and training, highlights successful employment throughout history and the results of this employment, as well as misemployment of SEALs and the results, and validates the proposition that the comparative advantage of SEALs is in conducting direct action (DA) missions. This comparative advantage will be established by examining SEAL recruitment, training, equipping, ethos, culture, and historical employment.

Through a literature review and interviews with senior SEAL personnel, this thesis explores the best employment of SEALs. Chapter II presents a brief overview of SOCOM.

Chapter III focuses on U.S. Navy SEAL culture, and how this culture is a product of their ethos, recruitment, training, and history. The description of training includes selection training, also known as BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL school), the training required to qualify as a SEAL (SEAL Qualification Training or SQT) once a service member graduates BUD/S, and the training SEAL Task Units go through to prepare them for deployment.

Chapter IV analyzes case studies of historic employments of SEALs—both successful and unsuccessful. These case studies will reveal the reasons for success or failure of SEAL operations.

Chapter V synthesizes the information presented in Chapter III (culture and training) with information from Chapter IV (case studies) in order to show the comparative advantage NSW forces have in Direct Action missions.

Chapter VI discusses the strategic utility of SEALs and recommendations for future SEAL employment. It looks at the SEALs' maritime niche and provides prioritization of SEAL missions.

Chapter VI is the conclusion and addresses the future for Naval Special Warfare. Also discussed are the lessons learned by SEAL leadership over the past eight years. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the United State's need to retain a single-focused direct action unit within SOCOM and how the U.S. Navy SEALs are a force born and bred for this mission

B. STRATEGIC UTILITY

Strategic utility is how a military directly contributes to the strategic outcome of a war (C. Gray, 1996). It is where a force can provide the most beneficial impact in support of their nation's strategy. This impact may be in the SOF's ability to facilitate others to military success or as an effective deterrent against hostilities (C. Gray, 1996).

The strategist, Colin Gray, studied the strategic utility of specific actions within a larger conflict. For this paper, we will study strategic utility as related to the U.S. Navy SEALs as a force.

C. SOCOM AND SOF

After the abortive and disastrous attempt to rescue the 53 hostages from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran on April 24, 1980 legislation was passed to ensure the Army, Air Force and Navy paid due attention to the requirements, manning, training and equipping of special operations forces. The resulting legislation was the Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. This amendment resulted in the creation of the Special Operations Command, more commonly referred to as SOCOM. As directed by the Cohen-Nunn amendment, SOCOM was given responsibility for, among other things, training assigned forces; developing strategy, doctrine, and tactics; ensuring combat readiness; and the preparedness of special operations forces assigned to other unified combatant commands to carry out assigned missions (Cohen-Nunn, 1987). The amendment also directed Special Operations to be responsible for ten distinct missions. The directed missions were: Counter Terrorism, Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Unconventional Warfare, Psychological Operations, Foreign Internal Defense, Humanitarian Assistance, Theater Search and Rescue and "Such other activities as may be specified by the President or Secretary of Defense" (Cohen-Nunn, 1987). These requirements have since been modified as reflected in SOF's nine core tasks published in Joint Pub 3-05. These slightly modified Core Tasks are: Counter Terrorism, Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Unconventional Warfare, Psychological Operations, Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Counter Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Civil Affairs, and Information Operations (see

Appendix for further descriptions of each mission). The tenth tenet is no longer stated but inherently applies.

What had been a secondary effort by the parent services were now recognized fighting units with the capability of deploying as versatile, self-contained teams that provide a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) or a Joint Forces Commander (JFC) with an extremely flexible force capable of operating in "ambiguous and swiftly changing scenarios" (Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, 2003, p.III-1). Doctrine states that these forces can:

- Quickly deploy to provide tailored responses.
- Gain access to hostile or denied areas.
- Provide limited medical support for themselves and those they support.
- Communicate worldwide with organic equipment.
- Conduct operations in austere, harsh environments without extensive support.
- Survey and assess local situations and report these assessments rapidly.
- Work closely with regional military and civilian authorities and populations.
- Organize people into working teams to help solve local problems.
- Deploy with a generally lower profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces.
- Provide unconventional options for addressing ambiguous situations.

Sometime after these tenets and capabilities were published, the units under SOCOM deduced that it was necessary for *each* of them to be capable of executing all of the missions for which SOCOM was responsible. Rather

than divide the responsibility among the warfighting units to ensure SOCOM as a whole had these capabilities, the units took it upon themselves to ensure they each had these capabilities. This has created multi-tasked organizations, that while the title bears the name "Special," in reality, the forces were becoming no more than elite general purpose forces.

Placing the primary and secondary requirements and capabilities of SOF into a spectrum ranging from indirect action to direct action highlights the range of tasks required of our SOF. Denoting the primary missions above the spectrum line and the secondary missions below, Figure 1 illustrates the spectrum of special operations.

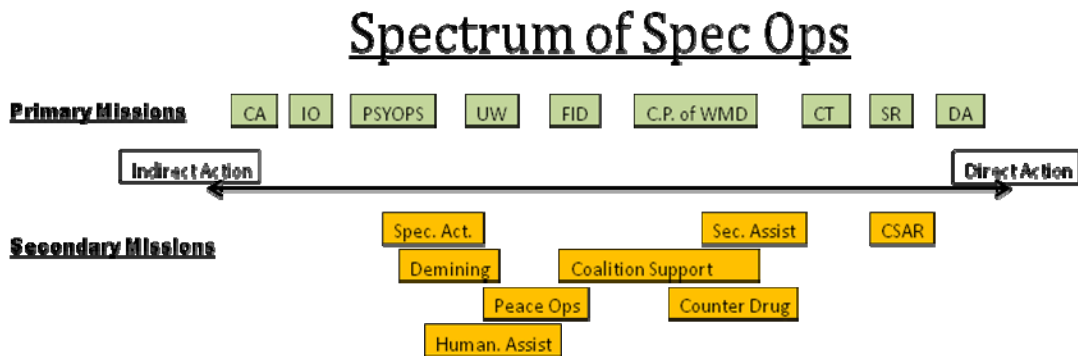


Figure 1. Spectrum of Special Operations

In the 1990s, deploying forces to the combatant commands was not an overly taxing requirement for SOCOM. Forces were assigned to combatant commands on a fairly steady basis to cope with relatively few "hot" wars. To properly perform their mission SOCOM ensured funding and equipment reached the various units falling under their purview (United States Special Operations Command History

2007). Also, SOCOM coordinated with the various combatant commands to ensure the appropriate troops were assigned to conduct joint exercises.

This changed drastically in 2001. Since September 2001, these forces are among the most deployed U.S. units in the GWOT. SOCOM was initially designated as the "Supported Command," ensuring America's elite war fighters had a key role in the war. This increased demand on SOF over the past eight years has placed a strain on the relatively small U.S. SOF. With approximately 2,500 active duty SEALs, 4,500 active duty Special Forces, and 2,800 Army Rangers, it became impossible to deploy these SOF everywhere to meet all operational requirements.

It would be wise for SOCOM to review the strengths and weaknesses of each of its subordinate commands to ensure the efficient use of limited resources. Taking into account the historic lineage, the cultural proclivity and the functional differentiation, a "Spectrum of Special Operations," along with an appropriate division of labor, are illustrated in Figure 2.

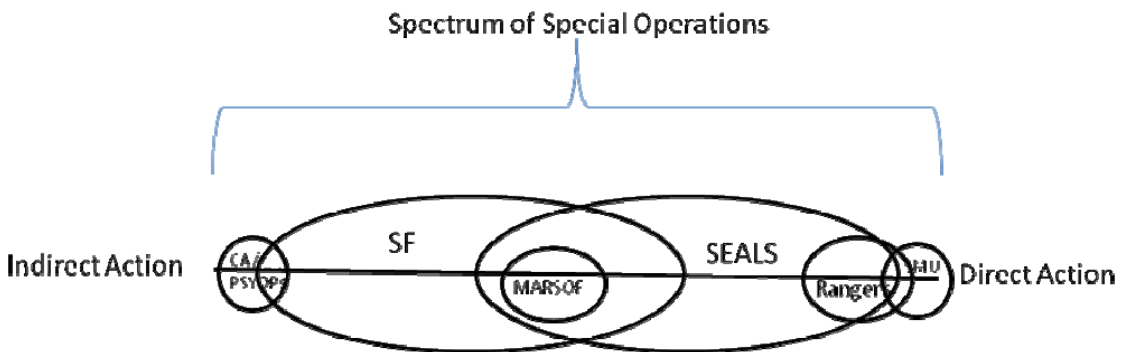


Figure 2. Spectrum of Special Operations

This spectrum shows an efficient division of labor based on the specialization of the units under SOCOM. SEALs have shown an ability to conduct indirect action missions and SF has shown an ability to conduct direct action missions but primacy must match their individual comparative advantages in order to ensure the highest levels of readiness and force availability. We must, as Admiral Olson said, be able to respond to whatever the enemy throws at us. The U.S. must have a holistic approach to war, allowing us to defeat our adversaries and deny them the the environment they need to prosper (E. T. Olson, Spring 2009).

The information presented in this paper will illustrate why "capturing and killing adversaries will always be necessary" (E. T. Olson, Spring 2009) and why the above division of labor is the most efficient, effective and appropriate division labor for SOCOM units and specifically, why SEALs should retain their position on the right side (Direct Action) of the spectrum.

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II. INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

A. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM) TASKS

In 1987, Congress recognized the uniqueness of special operations (SO) and established SOCOM (Special Operations Command). It is now one ten Unified Combatant Commands. Composed of five subordinate commands: USASOC, NAVSPECWARCOM, JSOC, AFSOC, and MARSOC, its mission is to, "Provide fully capable Special Operations Forces to defend the United States and its interests. Plan and synchronize operations against terrorist networks." (USSOCOM/SOCS-HO 2008) Congress recognized then the importance of specialized and appropriately trained and equipped military units to fight the nation's war.

Prior to September 11, 2001 the Unified Command Plan instructed USSOCOM to "organize, train, and equip SOF to ensure the Geographic Combatant Commander could employ SOF in their respective areas." (USSOCOM/SOCS-HO, 2008, p.16) In this sense, the Commander of SOCOM has historically acted as a "supporting command."² For the first time, in March of 2005, USSOCOM was assigned the role of "supported command"³ (United States Special Operations Command History, 2007, p.16), taking on a role:

² A supporting command is one that provides necessary personnel or material to another command which has the lead, or is in some way has overall responsibility for a specified task.

³ A supported command is one which has the lead or overall responsibility for a specified task. Among other things they organize, synchronize and delegate what will be done to accomplish a task. They are assisted by subordinate or "supporting" commands.

as the lead combatant commander for planning, synchronizing, and as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders. (United States Special Operations Command History 2007, p.17).

Under this authority Admiral Olson, Commander of SOCOM, is aggressively pursuing a two-fold mission- first, to continue the historic role of providing forces for the regional combatant commanders, and second, to plan and synchronize the Global War on Terror amongst all Combatant Commanders (Olson, 2008).

These efforts to plan and synchronize the current war are proving to be a full-time and exhausting job. Contributing to the war in a limited, yet critical manner, SOF provides the strategic and operational war planner with flexibility and capabilities different from the conventional military. SOF performs missions that either, no other forces in the Department of Defense (DoD) can conduct, or they perform tasks that other forces can conduct but do so in conditions and to standards not possible of other forces (Joint Publication 3.5, 2003, p.24).

B. THEORY BEHIND SOF

Having an understanding of what SOF can do does not preclude their misuse. Joint Publication 3-05 also makes mention of the limitations of SOF and puts forth effort to define their improper employment. As stated in the Joint Pub 3-05:

Improper employment of SO resources in purely conventional roles or on inappropriate / inordinately high-risk missions runs the risk of depleting these resources rapidly. (P.II-3)

The document continues by stating,

SOF are not a substitute for conventional forces but a necessary adjunct to existing conventional capabilities. Depending upon requirements, SOF can operate independently or in conjunction with conventional forces. SOF should not be used for operations whenever conventional forces can accomplish the mission. (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, p.II-2)

Employment of SOF in conventional roles is being witnessed more and more as the U.S. fights a war on two fronts. SOFs have proven themselves capable of executing short duration conventional operations, but, as stated, special operations forces are not a substitute for conventional forces (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, p.II-3). Limited personnel, increased work load, and increased Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) have necessitated the increased roles SOF in the varied battle spaces. Still, this should not deter political or military decision makers from employing SOF in purely strategic or operational roles for the nation. SOF should not be used simply to replace conventional forces.

Special Operations Forces were initially created to execute tasks that require special training and require familiarity with a particular type of mission (Cohen, 1978). Because of this specialization and increased capability, SOF must be viewed and used as a strategic asset (Gray, 1999). As pointed out in the military's doctrine of Special Operations, Joint Publication 3-05,

"success by a small force against a strategic or operational objective usually has required units with combinations of special equipment, training, people, or tactics that go beyond those found in conventional units" (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, p II-1). In this sense, SOF should normally be employed against targets with strategic or operational relevance. To view SOF as anything but a strategic and/or operational asset, threatens to employ them outside of their intended utility, with possible catastrophe ensuing from this misuse.

C. EVOLUTION OF SOF MISSIONS

SOF missions have become diverse and varied as a result of deliberate legislation, historical accidents and a general tendency to accept any new task that does not fall within conventional parameters (Adams, 1998, p.303). This proliferation of SOF missions can be attributed to conventional commanders wanting to ensure success by using the best forces and SOF leaders always feeling a need to prove their relevance (Kapusta, 2000). But this expansion of missions made it impossible for any one unit to remain exceptionally proficient in every area. This presents SOF commanders with the challenge to determine where to focus limited resources in order to effectively prepare for the future (Kapusta, 2000).

Later in this paper, we will examine instances where SEALs have been properly used as well as misused. Learning from these cases, and recognizing that SOF is a limited resource, recommendations will be made on how best to employ SEALs for the greatest strategic utility.

III. SEALS

This chapter will provide a greater understanding of where SEALs come from, their ethos, their training, their history and how they are organized as a fighting force. Taking these factors into account, the reader will begin to gain an understanding of what is arguably the direct action "culture" of the SEALs. This chapter highlights the physical demands, the training and the lineage, which are all connected to a kinetic, direct action oriented force.

A. THE CULTURE CREATED

Culture is the process of inculcating points of view, biases, fundamental attitudes, and loyalties (Wilson 1989,p.92). Culture is to an organization as personality is to an individual. An organization's culture is generally passed from one generation to the next, and like generational culture, it changes slowly if at all (Wilson 1989, p. 91).

SEALs have often been described as having a "direct action culture." For years, this depiction was a matter of pride among SEALs and their leadership. Recently though, this term has taken on an almost slanderous tone. By looking at organizational culture and how the SEALs acquired it, it can be understood why it is so deeply rooted in their existence.

In his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Edgar H. Schein associates organizational culture with ideas such as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions and symbols (Schein 1992, p.10). Peters and

Waterman found that organizations with weak culture, unclear objectives or divergent aims performed poorly (Peters and Waterman 1982). Conversely, they espouse that the dominance of a coherent culture "proved to be an essential quality of ... excellent companies" and strong organizational culture permeates the most successful groups (Peters and Waterman, 1982, p.75).

The elements of selection, training, pre-deployment preparation, as well the early history of the Navy SEALs point to an institutional importance, or organizational culture, of physical capability, proven physical and mental toughness, violence of action oriented methods and a direct action operational mind set. Over the years, this action-oriented mentality has become synonymous with the way SEALs conduct business. It has become "their way of doing things." This further reinforces the idea of the SEAL culture, as Kotter and Heskett state in *Corporate Culture and Performance*:

Firms with strong cultures are usually seen by outsiders as having a certain "style" and "way of doing things." They often make their shared values known in a creed or mission statement and seriously encourage their managers to follow that statement (*Kotter and Heskett, 1992, p. 15*).

Kotter and Heskett further relate the widely believed concept that organizations with strong cultures are often associated with excellent performance (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Such an academic accolade should give the SEALs more confidence and determination in retaining this direct action, centric way of thinking.

Just as those within the military, but outside NSW, identify SEALs with this culture of battlefield violence,

so too do many outside the military. This is, for the most part, why individuals go through the hellish rigors of BUD/S. They aspire to be part of this action-oriented culture. If NSW attempted to institute a community wide shift in culture, deep frustration and disillusionment could quickly follow. If one accepts what Kotter and Heskett claim as essential to "excellent performance," that is, a "strong culture," then it stands to reason that an organization without a "strong culture" or with divided cultures will provide less than "excellent performance." Similarly, if an individual voluntarily goes through the rites of initiation to be a member of an organization based on an espoused culture, that individual will feel roundly disenfranchised, if the organization alters its culture. Again, Kotter and Heskett address this need to fit the culture to the organization and the organization to embrace the "appropriate" culture. There is no one-size-fits-all "winning" culture that works well everywhere. They assert a culture is only successful if it fits its environment, and the better the fit of the culture to the strategic goals the better the organization's performance. This concept of "fit" and organizational performance is manifested in the statement, "The better the [cultural] fit the better the performance; the poorer the fit the poorer the performance" (Kotter and Heskett, p.28).

When an organization has a widely accepted culture, that organization has a sense of mission. A sense of mission gives members a sense of special worth and provides a basis for recruitment (Wilson, 1989). If NSW was to adopt a non-kinetic, indirect action oriented mission set, and therefore, aspire to a non-direct action culture, it

would assuredly contribute to an organizational schizophrenia. If two cultures struggle under this organization, one will dominate the other, and the dominated culture will become a subordinated step-child (Wilson, 1989). As history has shown, it would be difficult to balance or assimilate the culture of a hunting society to that of a cultivating society. It may not be impossible, but it will take generations to purge the traditions, reinvent the values, and instill the behavior patterns in order to redirect the deep rooted culture.

B. SEAL ETHOS

United States Navy SEAL

In times of war or uncertainty there is a special breed of warrior ready to answer our Nation's call. A common man with uncommon desire to succeed. Forged by adversity, he stands alongside America's finest special operations forces to serve his country, the American people, and protect their way of life. I am that man.

My Trident is a symbol of honor and heritage. Bestowed upon me by the heroes that have gone before, it embodies the trust of those I have sworn to protect. By wearing the Trident I accept the responsibility of my chosen profession and way of life. It is a privilege that I must earn every day.

My loyalty to Country and Team is beyond reproach. I humbly serve as a guardian to my fellow Americans always ready to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. I do not advertise the nature of my work, nor seek recognition for my actions. I voluntarily accept the inherent hazards of my profession, placing the welfare and security of others before my own.

I serve with honor on and off the battlefield. The ability to control my emotions and my

actions, regardless of circumstance, sets me apart from other men. Uncompromising integrity is my standard. My character and honor are steadfast. My word is my bond.

We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations.

I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight.

We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me—my technical skill, tactical proficiency, and attention to detail. My training is never complete.

We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required yet guided by the very principles that I serve to defend.

Brave men have fought and died building the proud tradition and feared reputation that I am bound to uphold. In the worst of conditions, the legacy of my teammates steadies my resolve and silently guides my every deed. I will not fail.
(Navy SEAL home page, 2008)

Although relatively new, this ethos attempts, and succeeds, in tying today's newly "pinned" SEAL to the first SEAL, and even to the birth of Navy Special Warfare in WWII. This ethos is an attempt to encapsulate all a SEAL is and stands for in nine succinct paragraphs. It is an

admission of NSW's direct action-oriented history and culture using words such as "physically harder and mentally stronger," "draw on every ounce of strength," "tactical proficiency," "train for war and fight to win," "I'm never out of the fight," and "execution will be swift and violent." These words set the foundation of what a SEAL believes, who he is and what he strives to be.

Posted throughout the teams and associated NSW commands is this image:



Figure 3. U.S. Navy Seal Code (From Navy SEAL home page, 2008)

An abbreviated version of the ethos, it is designed to remind SEALs daily what it means to be a member of this small community. It is meant to instill pride and

responsibility. The SEAL is ever reminded through this image that his job, both on and off the battlefield, is to train for war and fight to win.

C. TRAINING

Multiple books, TV shows and articles have been produced over the years illustrating the rigors of SEAL basic training. Known as BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL), it is lauded as the most physically demanding military training in the world, a fact from which every SEAL gains a great deal of pride. The physically exhausting aspect of BUD/S demands exceptionally fit personnel. In addition to the physical necessities of the training, candidates must have the mental fortitude to persevere through the physical, emotional and psychological strain to which they are subjected. In an attempt to increase their numbers, Naval Special Warfare has committed a great deal of energy and resources to not only training future SEALs but to finding and recruiting the "right" men.

1. Recruitment

Naval Special Warfare has attempted a number of refinements in the way they approach recruiting. Ideas, such as simply increasing the numbers through the door, have proven ineffective. There have been claims that recruiting primarily from northern states is the best course of action, since those individuals are used to being cold. But this idea, and others like it, has been debunked, as exceptional men come from all parts of the United States. The most recent refinement for recruiting is to increase the *quality* of recruits coming to BUD/S, not

the *quantity*. This is being done by implementing a battery of psychological tests and evaluations to determine if the recruit has the mental fortitude necessary to complete BUD/S. While these tests may give insight into how an individual may behave or react to a particular situation, they cannot measure what may be the most important quality of a future BUD/S student: his *desire*. As one senior enlisted leader within NSW stated, "The best measurement to determine a good candidate *is* BUD/S" (Licause, 2009).

Still, the body pool must come from somewhere, so leaders in the community must concentrate efforts in some intelligent manner. The age limit to attend BUD/S is 28 years old; it is a young man's game. Waivers can be written, but they are rare. To accomplish the desired goal of recruiting the most capable individuals, recruitment for enlisted SEALs is focused on young, capable athletes. NSW is working with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association, attempting to use this network of coaches and organizations to get the word out about SEALs, and build interest in becoming a SEAL (Licause, 2009). Exploiting demographic data already existing within the community, NSW recruiters are also working with USA Water Polo, USA Swimming, rugby organizations and wrestling organizations. In addition, while the demographics do not fully support it, the Navy and NSW put a great deal of resources towards advertising at the 2008 Ironman Triathlon World Championship held in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii (Licause, 2009).

To further ensure enlisted success, Captain Duncan Smith put considerable effort into ensuring "candidates knew, really knew, what becoming a SEAL meant" (Smith,

2009). They incorporated the SEAL Ethos into intra-Navy, also known as "in-fleet," marketing plans and asked the Navy's ad agency to do the same.

In the recent past, physical ability has been the primary focus of recruiters and the prime qualifier of recruits because it was lacking in most candidates. In March 2006, the pass rate on the SEALS Physical Screening Test (PST) at the Navy's Great Lakes Training Facility was 28%. After a lengthy campaign by NSW flag leadership to have Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) make the PST mandatory for SEAL candidates *before* enlisting in the Navy, the pass rate rose to approximately 90%.⁴

Several programs now exist to mentor and encourage potential SEAL recruits. One very successful program was created to support the need for enlisted candidates to meet conditioning standards. This program gave candidates the opportunity to spend time with SEAL operators is the Navy *SEAL Fitness Challenge*. Started in 2006 as an NSW recruiting directorate initiative, NRC now funds and runs this as a national event. Key to its success is direct and ongoing NSW involvement (Smith 2009).

Recruitment for officers is almost unnecessary. A form of self selection exists within the officer candidates. Potential commissioned BUD/S students habitually exceed the standards of selection. They routinely prove physically and mentally prepared for the rigors of BUD/S. This exceptional preparation can likely be attributed to two factors; 1) these potential SEAL

⁴ SEAL Master Chief Vic Licause was the champion of this effort and many other SEAL recruiting aims.

officers are older and, therefore, more mature and capable of dealing with the expected hardships, and 2) they have seen the movies, the advertisements and are at least nominally familiar with the literature produced about SEALs, and are attracted by the recognized physical requirements. This attraction to the SEALs has created a situation unusual in most of the military. NSW leadership must make the determination who to turn away as candidates. In this sense, NSW leadership has come up with criteria to determine not only which candidate officer can make it through BUD/S, but also who will be the best officer for the community. Different people on selection committees will obviously have different criteria, but after talking to an O-6 previously in charge of SEAL recruiting, it became evident what a general list for choosing officer candidates will likely include: maturity, athletic strength and team experience, focus⁵, and exceptional Physical Screening Test (PST) scores⁶.

All this effort and the concentration of resources illustrate NSW's desire to focus on the physical capabilities of recruits. Intelligent recruits are common,

⁵ 40 potential officer applicants were interviewed in three years by the O-6 interviewed. Only eight were endorsed. Two candidates with many of the right qualifications not endorsed were a former Marine officer with combat experience but marginal PT scores and a Stanford quarterback with an Ironman Triathlon background. These were amazingly talented individuals in their own right, but each was comparing NSW with other disparate career options.

⁶ The Captain interviewed saw these scores as different from "athleticism." It also incorporates focus. An accomplished college wrestler is no shoe-in for the 500 yd swim. He needs to work on it. The Olympic swimmer needs to train hard to run a sub 9 minute 1.5 mile. There are so many officer candidates that are exceptional; the PST becomes an effective filter or tool in reducing the applicant pool.

many enlisted men are coming in with bachelor's degrees⁷, some even with master's degrees. But education aside, once in the SEAL Teams, professional knowledge is gained out of necessity in order to remain an effective part of the Team. Above all, physical capability is sought after and respected throughout the SEAL community.

2. BUD/S

Broken into three phases, this six-month school is a grueling screening and assessment process that routinely experiences 70% attrition. First Phase is eight weeks of intensive conditioning; testing the candidates' physical ability and mental toughness. Much of this phase consists of daily early morning calisthenics, timed beach runs, timed open ocean swims, and timed obstacle courses. In addition to these timed activities, there are untimed, but highly monitored, physical activities such as Log PT,⁸ rope climbs, buddy carry races, surf passage,⁹ and water competency tests. With morning musters around 0430 and the morning calisthenics beginning at 0500, the candidates are active until dinner time at 1800. They must then go back to their quarters and properly clean and maintain their gear, clean their rooms and prepare their equipment and

⁷ One third of enlisted BUD/S graduates have a college degree. Fifty percent of the enlisted men in a recent graduating class had bachelor's degrees.

⁸ Log PT (Physical Training) consists of a five or six man team (known as a boat crew) conducting various physical activities, to include sit-ups, "push-ups" (bench press like exercise), over-head press, squats, running races, etc., all with a 300 pound, ten-foot long wooden pole, similar to a telephone pole.

⁹ Surf Passage is an activity in which the boat crew paddles their Inflatable Boat, Small (IBS) (an eight foot long inflatable rubber raft) out past the surf zone (breaking waves) then back up to the beach, repeated "until the instructors get tired".

uniforms for the next day. This maintenance may go until 2100 or 2200—the next day holds a similar routine for them. The swan song of First Phase is the infamous “Hell Week,” five days of physical endurance in which the candidates are allowed about four hours of sleep total. Hell Week is a test of physical endurance, mental tenacity and true teamwork where two-thirds or more of every class quit or “ring the bell.”¹⁰ Physical discomfort and pain causes many to decide that it is not worth it. The miserable wet-cold, approaching hypothermia, will make others quit. Some simply cannot imagine doing the same thing for the next three or four days. Whatever the individual reasons, BUD/S students wishing to quit are not encouraged to stay, if they do not have the tenacity to do it now, no one can say they will obtain it on the battlefield.

Those determined enough to complete Hell Week proceed to Second Phase. This phase is eight weeks long and is where the BUD/S students learn open circuit (SCUBA) and closed circuit (bubbleless) diving. This training is ostensibly to prepare future SEALs for a method of insertion or to conduct assaults against enemy ships or facilities. While this phase is not as physically brutal as First Phase, students do fail out, failing dive physics tests, other academic challenges, or an inability to perform particular physical and job related requirements. Combat diving is the focus of the phase, with the last couple weeks of Second Phase consisting of multiple mock ship attacks.

¹⁰ To “Ring the Bell” is to quit. It is a physical act by the student conducted by ringing a brass bell hanging in front of the instructors’ office. The student rings the bell three times signaling the student’s desire to Drop on Request, or DOR.

Third Phase is nine weeks of land warfare/small unit tactics training. Here BUD/S students learn weapons safety, marksmanship, land navigation, small unit tactics and demolitions. The physical nature of BUD/S increases again, with daily physical training (PT), long runs, ruck sack runs and various other "creative" activities administered by the instructors. A portion of the training is conducted on training grounds at and near Coronado, CA, the home of BUD/S. For three weeks the students are sent to San Clemente Island for small unit tactics. All aspects of the San Diego and San Clemente based training of Third Phase concentrate on physical fitness, marksmanship, land navigation and direct action missions against an enemy. Students may still be dismissed from the program for weapons and demolitions safety violations.

D. SEAL QUALIFICATION TRAINING

After BUDS is completed, trainees go through the U.S. Army Basic Parachute Training. From there, they go onto SEAL Qualification Training (SQT). This is three months of advanced training, placing a large emphasis on land warfare, land navigation, close quarters combat, combat swimmer operations, marksmanship, demolition, urban warfare, and air operations (parachuting, heli-borne assaults, helicopter fast roping, helicopter rappelling). At no point in the initial training of a SEAL does he learn foreign culture, language, stability operations, Civil Affairs or other non-kinetic IW skills.

1. Pre-deployment Work Up / Task Unit Training

Once formed into a Task Unit (TU), SEALs continue to receive intensive training to prepare them for the battlefield. The blocks of training SEAL Task Units take part in vary in the order they are conducted. This is primarily because of training cadre and training location availability. The length of training also varies depending on the priorities of the community at the time, i.e. during the initial stages of Afghanistan and Iraq, Task Units dedicated considerably less time to diving operations (approximately a third of what was dedicated prior to September 11 2001). Minor changes are common in the order of the following training blocks and additions and deletions of shorter courses, e.g. Advanced First Aid, may not be scheduled for a specific Team or even a specific coast (West Coast or East Coast). That being said, the following is a generic list of the training a SEAL Task Unit participates in.

a. Land Warfare

This training block is often three to five weeks long. It consists of marksmanship, mostly rifle, as well as land navigation, small unit tactics, Immediate Action Drills (IADs, the actions taken if the unit comes under enemy fire), raids, ambushes, heavy weapons and stand-off weapons training.

b. Close Quarters Combat (CQC)

Usually two weeks in length, this is the training necessary for an individual up to an entire Task Unit to enter a building and effectively move through and secure

it. During this training, Task Units conduct small arms training, both rifle and pistol, on stationary, moving and multiple targets.

c. *Special Operations in Urban Combat (SOUC)*

Often known as Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT), this two-week block concentrates on house-to-house fighting and movement through hostile streets. This training has become of great importance with the amount of combat operations conducted in Iraq.

d. *Mobility*

Approximately two weeks in duration, this training focuses on the operations and maintenance of HMMWVs. The training is done as individual vehicles and multivehicle detachments.

e. *Air Week*

Besides having helicopters throughout the work up, usually in-land warfare and SOUC, SEALs dedicate a week to fixed wing air operations. This includes Static Line and Military Free Fall parachute jumps on to land and into water. The SEALs also participate in "Duck Drops", jumps with numerous men and up to four Combat Rubber Raiding Crafts (CRRC) or Zodiac rubber boats.

f. *Dive Training*

For many years, this was a three to five-week block of training. With the predominance of SEALs fighting a land war, emphasis on the water operations was shortened, in some cases down to a week. Recently, the community has rededicated efforts to this capability and now conducts up

to two to three weeks training that focuses on underwater navigation using a rebreather (bubbles) diving system.

g. First Aid / Trauma

A recent addition to an already over-loaded schedule, this one week training introduces the SEALs to advanced battlefield trauma treatment.

h. Close Quarters Battle (Hand to Hand)

A one week training regime (which has one week advanced courses if time allows) focusing on offensive and defensive measures of armed and unarmed fighting.

2. Pre-Deployment Individual Training

During the 12 to 18 month predeployment workup, SEALs also go to individual schools to learn specialized skills, such as Sniper, out-board motor repair, Range Safety Office, etc. The classes SEALs go through are designed to better allow the SEALs to conduct their missions overseas. At no time does the Task Unit or individual SEAL undergo "Irregular" or "Unconventional" Warfare training. A few SEALs have recently been given the opportunity to take language courses, but the extended time necessary for this (3-12 months) conflicts with training required to be a competent member of a SEAL team. Any sort of cultural awareness or indigenous interaction techniques are usually learned on the job. It is also important to note that the training blocks conducted and the emphasis of most all SEAL training is on short duration operations. SEAL missions are, by in large, measured in hours, *maybe* days. Adopting the adage, "Fight like you train, train like you fight", it

seems SEALs train for, and should therefore fight, short duration, direct action oriented mission sets.

E. HISTORY

The history of the U.S. Navy SEALs is traced back to the Scouts and Raiders, Navy Combat Demolition Units, Office of Strategic Services Operational Swimmers, and Underwater Demolition Teams of World War II.

The Scouts and Raiders originated as a joint force responsible for pre-invasion reconnaissance in preparation for amphibious assaults (Kapusta, 2000). As Rear Admiral Richard Lyon said in his interview for *The Frogmen of World War II*:

Our mission was to scout out beaches and waterways to determine if they were safe for amphibious landings, and then to lead the troops into safe channels to the beach. (Cunningham, 2005, p.127)

Later this mission was enlarged to include erecting markers for the incoming craft, taking offshore soundings, blowing up beach obstacles and maintaining communications between troops ashore and forces offshore (Naval Special Warfare Command, History n.d.). In the Sino-American campaign in and around China, Scouts and Raiders formed the core of what was envisioned as a "guerrilla amphibious organization of Americans and Chinese, operating from coastal waters, lakes and rivers employing small steamers and sampans" (Naval Special Warfare Command, History, 2008). This group of Scouts and Raiders conducted intelligence collection and limited guerrilla warfare along the coast of occupied China. This set the precedence for later SEALs to successfully conduct land based operations (Kelly, 1992, pp.55-58).

In the European Theater, Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDU) blew eight complete gaps and two partial gaps allowing access to the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944. Suffering 52% casualties they managed to clear 700 yards of beach in two hours, and another 900 yards by the afternoon (Naval Special Warfare Command, History, 2008).

The exhausting combat operations these forces conducted made it imperative they could safely use explosives under the harshest of conditions. To ensure this was conducted safely and successfully Draper Kauffmann (later Admiral) was put in charge of NCDU's explosives training. Kauffmann placed unparalleled importance on physical fitness to ensure careless mistakes were not made out of exhaustion (Kapusta 2000, p.80, Kelly 1992, p.17). This intensive physical fitness became a cornerstone for Naval Special Operations, recognizable in today's SEALs.

The disastrous U.S. Marine amphibious landing at Tarawa, in which naval landing vessels were stuck on a reef 500 yards off the coast, causing the unnecessary slaughter of almost 1,000 Marines, illuminated the importance of hydrographic reconnaissance and underwater demolition in preparation for amphibious landings. In response, a total of 34 Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) were formed. These "naked warriors," wearing swim suits, swim fins and masks, saw action throughout the Pacific in Eniwetok, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Angaur, Ulithi, Pelilui, Leyte, Lingayen Gulf, Zambales, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Labuan, Brunei Bay, and Balikpapan on Borneo (Naval Special Warfare Command, History 2008).

With the outset of the Korean War, UDT personnel were assigned to Special Operations Group, or SOG; their numbers eventually reaching a combined strength of 300. UDTs successfully conducted beach and river reconnaissance, mine sweeping operations, demolition raids on railroad tunnels and bridges, and infiltrated guerrillas behind enemy lines from the sea. Harkening back to their original purpose, UDT personnel conducted pre-invasion preparations for the landing at Inchon. Scouting mud flats, marking low points in the channel, searching for mines, and clearing fouled propellers during the invasion, UDT personnel assisted in the successful amphibious assault.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy informed The Department of Defense that he wanted the U.S. Navy to commission a unit capable of unconventional and commando warfare (Kelly, 1992). President Kennedy's purpose for this force was to have men who "could fight the dirty guerrilla wars" expected in America's future (Dockery, 2004, p235). This new group would concentrate, as per guidance of the President, on a three-faceted mission:

1. Develop a specialized Navy capability in guerrilla / counter-guerrilla operations to include training of selected personnel in a wide variety of skills
2. Development of doctrinal tactics
3. Development of special support equipment

(Dockery, 2004)

The Navy turned to their Underwater Demolition Teams to act as the cornerstone for this new "commando" unit.

From these teams and from those recruited throughout the active duty Navy, the United States Navy Sea Air Land (SEAL) Teams were formed.

As Vietnam escalated, SEALs and UDTs were introduced to the theater in an advisory role. SEAL advisors instructed the Provincial Reconnaissance Units and the Lien Doc Nguoi Nhia, the Vietnamese SEALs, in clandestine maritime operations (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present 2004*, pp.426-427, 523-524). Eventually, in 1966, SEALs arrived in Vietnam with the sole purpose of conducting direct-action missions. Operating out of Nha Be, in the Rung Sat Special Zone, SEALs conducted raids, ambushes and clandestine operations in what was considered one of the most hostile regions of South Vietnam (Dockery, *SEALs In Action 1991*, pp.82-83, 89).

Still, being a separate entity, the UDTs acted independently of the SEALs, seeing combat in Vietnam while supporting the Amphibious Ready Groups. When attached to these riverine groups, the UDTs conducted operations with river patrol boats and, in many cases, patrolled into the hinterland as well as along the riverbanks and beaches in order to destroy obstacles and bunkers.

The post-Vietnam Navy determined it necessary to severely decrease the number of both UDTs and SEALs. UDTs felt this reduction in ranks most severely. By 1983, all remaining Underwater Demolition Teams were decommissioned, with the remaining UDT warriors being fully incorporated into the SEAL Teams.

As the SEALs gained notoriety and acceptance within the Navy, their mission and purpose was modified to more

thoroughly define what these naval commandos were to do. Naval Warfare Information Publication 29-1 was produced to detail the SEAL Mission Profile:

- (1) Primary: To develop a specialized capability to conduct operations for military, political, or economic purposes within an area occupied by the enemy for sabotage, demolition, and other clandestine activities conducted in and around restricted waters, rivers, and canals, and to conduct training of selected U.S., allied and indigenous personnel in a wide variety of skills for use in naval clandestine operations in hostile environments.
- (2) Secondary: To develop doctrine and tactics for SEAL operations and to develop support equipment, including special craft for use in these operations.
- (3) Tasks: Tasks may be overt or covert in nature.
 - (a) Destructive tasks-These tasks include clandestine attacks on enemy shipping, demolition raids in harbors and other enemy installations within reach; destruction of supply lines in maritime areas by destruction of bridges, railway lines, roads, canals, and so forth; and the delivery of special weapons (SADM) to exact locations in restricted waters, rivers or canals.
 - (b) Support tasks-The support tasks of SEAL Teams include protecting friendly supply lines, assisting or participating in the landing and support of guerrilla and partisan forces, and assisting or participating in the landing and recovery of agents, other special forces, downed aviators, escapees and so forth.
 - (c) Additional Tasks:
 1. Conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence collection missions as directed.
 2. In friendly areas train U.S. and indigenous personnel in such operations as directed.
 3. Develop equipment to support special operations.
 4. Develop the capability for small boat operations, including the use of native types.

Figure 4. Naval Warfare Information Publication 29-1 (From Dockery, 1991)

Although the SEALs were introduced to Vietnam as advisors and maintained limited advisory roles throughout, the majority of mission carried out through WWII, Korea and

Vietnam were direct action missions. The tasks dictated in NWIP 29-1 include training *guerrillas, partisans and indigenous personnel*. This is considered UW and the SEALs did, and continue to do, quite well at it. Using UW the way they understood it, it was often done as a means, the ends being to engage the enemy directly. In Vietnam, and recently in Iraq, SEALs have used UW as a method of entry into a warzone to allow SEALs to get into the fight; UW is not an end unto itself (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present 2004*, p.332).

F. UNIT ORGANIZATION

Since their inception, the core element of the SEAL Teams has been the platoon; a 16-man fighting force that deploys to forward located Naval Special Warfare Units.¹¹ Recently this has undergone some changes. Now, two platoons are placed together, working as a single Task Unit. When deployed, depending on what Area of Responsibility (AOR) to which they are deployed, a task unit may have Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel attached (such as is in CENTCOM) or a Special Boat Team (SBT) detachment assigned to them (as is common in EUROM and PACOM). Each SEAL Team has three task units as well as headquarters personnel.

¹¹ The three Naval Special Warfare Units (NSWU) are located in Guam (NSWU-1), Stuttgart, Germany (NSWU-2), and Bahrain (NSWU-3).

Naval Special Warfare – SEAL Teams

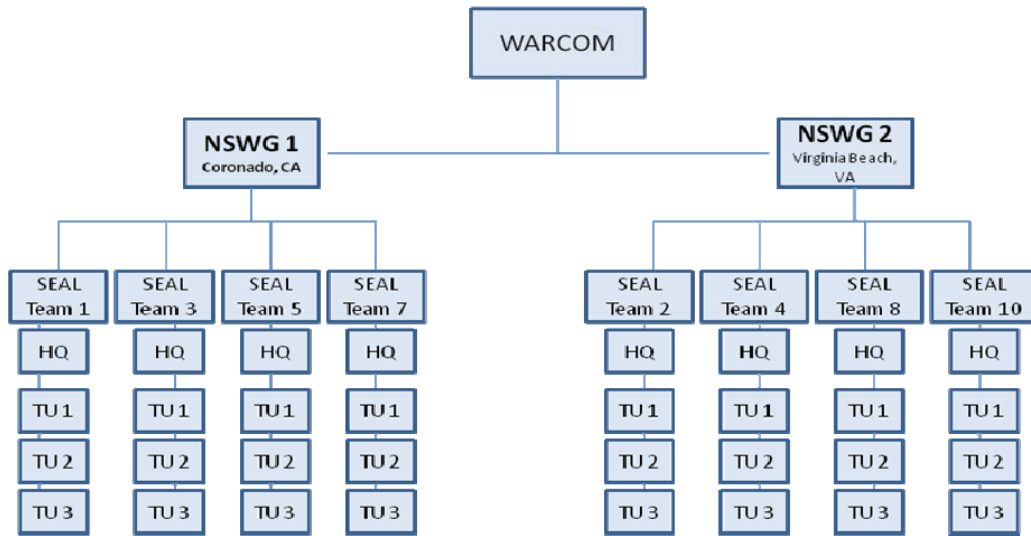


Figure 5. NSW SEAL Team Chain of Command

Four SEAL Teams are under each of the two Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWG): NSWG-1 in Coronado, CA and NSWG-2 in Virginia Beach, VA.¹² These two groups, along with NSWG-3 (Undersea Command based in Coronado, CA), NSWG-4 (Special Boat Teams Command based in Virginia Beach, VA) and Naval Special Warfare Command (training and advanced training based in Coronado, CA) answer to Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM), currently housed in Coronado, CA.

Naval Special Warfare Group THREE has a very unique responsibility and capability. Tasked with clandestine infiltration and undersea operations, NSWG-3 is in charge of the SEAL Delivery Vehicles (SDV) or mini subs, including the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) (Global Security.com, 2005).

¹² NSWG-1 oversees SEAL Teams 1, 3, 5, and 7. NSWG-2 oversees SEAL Teams 2, 4, 8, and 10.

Naval Special Warfare Group FOUR is tasked with training and equipping of Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC) as well as development and assessment of Special Warfare boats (NSWG-4, 2000). Within their inventory are the Mark V (a large "speedboat"), RHIBs (rigid hull inflatable boats), Special Operations Craft, Riverine (SOC-R), with other vessels currently undergoing testing and evaluation.

Naval Special Warfare Development Group (NSWDG) is NSW's Research and Development command. It is tasked with the development of NSW tactics, equipment, and techniques.

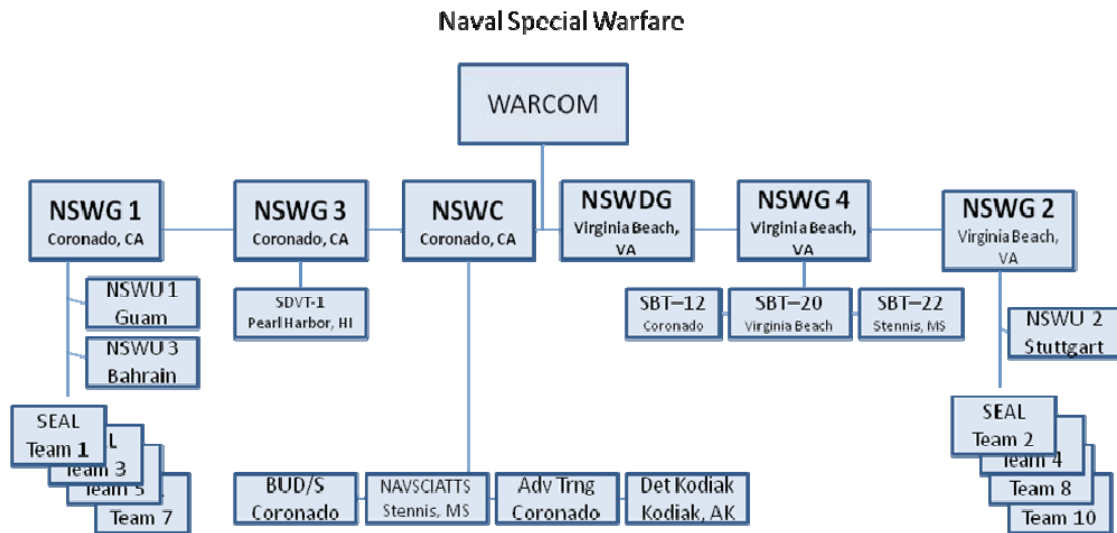


Figure 6. NSW Chain of Command

With approximately 2,500 active duty SEALs, Naval Special Warfare has long been the smallest community in SOCOM. But the list of supporting personnel, supporting assets and responsibility has greatly increased the size of the community. Still perceived as a small command, NSW is growing its numbers.

G. WHERE TRAINING AND CULTURE HAVE BROUGHT THEM

If NSW were to actively move away from their DA-oriented force, more harm than good would be done. As has been discussed in this chapter, SEALs are recruited, trained and organized to be a fighting force. To alter the organizational culture to something else would, as earlier stated, create an organizational schizophrenia. Extensive research has been done on top performing organizations, and one of the commonalities they all had was a strong, well defined culture (Peters and Waterman, 1982). To have an identifiable culture has proven to be a powerful asset. The SEALs should recognize where the past 48 years have taken them and continue to capitalize on their strengths. They should continue to embrace and promote the direct action culture for which they are specially trained.

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IV. CASE STUDIES—HISTORIC EMPLOYMENT OF SEALS

For the purposes of this paper, it will not be necessary to draw out intensive details of numerous case studies. Instead, the cases, some single operations with a single purpose, others a single operation with multiple purposes, and still others (Vietnam) presented as an overarching view of all operations conducted during that time, will be dissected using seven factors surrounding each case. These factors are:

- Purpose / Target, Means of Insertion
- Method of Engagement
- Duration of Mission
- Outcome
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved
- Reason for Success or Failure of each operation.

By using these criteria as a means of study, the intent is to give a condensed illustration of what SEALs have done and currently do. For wars such as Vietnam and the current War on Terror, the use of case studies is admittedly faulty. It would be impossible to study each and every SEAL mission. For Vietnam, the paper will examine the predominant types of missions executed. For Afghanistan, it will look at an operation that received particular attention (Operations Red Wings, which resulted in the death of 11 SEALs). For the Iraq case studies, it will investigate two cities, Ramadi and Habbaniyah referencing the common operations executed in each area. These two towns were chosen because they are viewed as successes in the counterinsurgency effort. Hopefully this

approach will give a fair breadth of direct and indirect, as well as successes and failures experienced by the SEALs over the past 48 years.

Success and failure of Special Operations is often hinged on the minutest of details. Chance and luck can often determine a mission's outcome reflective of the universal acceptance of "Murphy's, Law" among military personnel. But through careful analysis of missions, one can often find steps or missteps in planning, breakdowns or breakthroughs in communications or the availability of vital resources that proved the key to success or by its absence resulting in failure. In an effort to quantify what these factors are Lucien Vandenbroucke and William McRaven each wrote a book asserting the factors that cause failure or success, respectively.

In his book *Perilous Option*, Lucien Vandenbroucke describes the factors associated with Special Operations that cause failure. Vandenbroucke asserts that five factors: faulty intelligence, insufficient interagency or interservice coordination and cooperation, inadequate information and advice provided to decision makers, wishful thinking by decision makers, and over control by leadership far removed from the theater (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p.8), are responsible for the failure of SO. He makes this determination by examining four strategic special operations which exacted a heavy toll in human life and damage to U.S. prestige (Vandenbroucke 1993, p152). He hypothesizes that if a mission can eliminate all of these shortfalls the likelihood of success increases

significantly. Many of the failures presented in the following case studies reflect Vandenbroucke's elements of failure

In his book *SPECOPS*, William McRaven explains the factors that ensure Special Operations (particularly raids) succeed. These factors are: Surprise, Speed, Security, Repetition, Sense of Purpose, and Simplicity. Only when these factors are present can a small group of men obtain relative superiority over the enemy (McRaven, 1995). McRaven states that if we understand these factors for mission success we can better plan special operations to improve the chances of victory (McRaven, 1995, p2). By using case studies from the beginning of the SEALs (Vietnam) to present day (Afghanistan and Iraq) a "trend" reflecting the type of operations SEALs most often engage, successfully, will hopefully become apparent. Peter Paret outlines qualities that are necessary for an effective theory in his book *Understanding War*. One of the qualities is using examples from the past that can be understood, and remain relevant, today (Paret 1992,p103) (McRaven 1995,p381). Using these factors as a foundation of analysis, nine case studies will be analyzed. If the military understands the successes and failures of the past, it will better understand what is happening today, with the goal of better preparing for the future.

A. CASE STUDIES

1. Vietnam–March 1962–March 1973

- Purpose/Target. The initial mission for SEALs in Vietnam was military advisor to South Vietnamese special forces, the LDNN (Vietnamese equivalent

to the UDT or SEALs) and Provisional Reconnaissance Units¹³ (PRUs) (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004) (Edwards, 1991) (Nadel and Wright, 1994). The PRUs fell under the much debated, criticized and misunderstood Phoenix Program, a program to use locals to identify and neutralize the leadership and infrastructure of the National Liberation Front of Vietnam, or the Viet Cong. The emphasis on this mission quickly fades and SEALs primarily conducted direct action missions to include ambushes, reconnaissance missions, enemy personnel abduction (snatches, or as LCDR (Ret) Scott R. Lyon calls it, "flat-out kidnap the Viet Cong Leadership" (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004, p.269)), raids, and prisoner rescue operations (Edwards, 1991) (Nadel and Wright, 1994).

- Means of insertion. Working out of firebases (today often called the SEALs most often inserted by foot patrol or helicopter. Holding to their maritime roots, and working in predominately riverine environment the SEALs also made great use of patrol boats and indigenous craft.

¹³ PRUs were paramilitary organizations made up of local militia and foreign mercenaries from Cambodia and Laos. They were funded by the CIA and trained by U.S. military personnel. They were assigned to a province, preferably their home province; the idea being they would fight harder for their own turf (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present 2004*, p.427).

- Method of engagement. Usually working with what they could carry in such a harsh environment, the SEALs typically engaged the enemy with small arms and claymore mines
- Duration of mission. As mentioned, the SEALs worked out of fire bases. They would typically patrol out to an ambush site and lie up and wait, or they would conduct raid operations against a specified target. The missions were usually 6-12 hours in duration
- Outcome. Out of the hundreds of missions the SEALs conducted in Vietnam, it would be difficult to list every success and failure, but throughout the war they had mixed results. Even some of their "successes" consisted of days of planning netting only one or two enemy KIA or a weapons cache with a couple rifles (Hoyt 1993).
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved. As previously mentioned SEALs initially entered Vietnam as military advisors to the South Vietnamese Provincial Reconnaissance Units, *Hoi Chan* (Edwards, 1991) from the *Chieu Hoi* Program,¹⁴ and the Lien Doc Nguoi Nhia, or LDNN, the Vietnamese SEALs.

¹⁴ Chieu Hoi Program allowed Viet Cong and ex-North Vietnamese Army members to receive amnesty from South Vietnam. These individuals usually provided intelligence or armed resistance against the enemy (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004).

- Reason for success or failure. SEAL successes in Vietnam are usually attributed to violence of action (Wright, 1994), *surprise*, tenacity, and audacity. In addition, the SEALs consistently displayed an uncommon will to succeed, they used unorthodox approaches (everything from dressing as the enemy, or dressing in blue jeans and no shoes, to the way they conducted ambushes) and they were given unorthodox equipment (Stoner machine guns, silenced weapons) and unorthodox training. These last three attributes are pointed out by Lamb and Tucker in *United States Special Operations Forces* as being significant requirements for successful SOF. Intelligence collection by the SEALs for the SEALs has been pointed to as a success. But, oddly, while SEALs were able to collect effective intelligence many failures are attributed to a *lack of, or flawed, intelligence*, provided to them; a factor noted by Vandenbrouke in SO failures. More Vandenbrouke factors relevant to the overall war effort was inadequate information and *advice provided to decision makers* and *micromanagement by leadership* far removed from the theater, as well, this factor can not be directly attributed to individual SEAL failures.

2. Panama—Operation Just Cause—20 December 1989

- Purpose / Target. Three sixteen-man SEAL platoons with Air Force Combat Control Team (CCT) members, plus a seven-man C³ element, were tasked

with disabling (explicitly told not to destroy) Manuel Noriega's private Lear jet at Paitilla Airport, Panama City, Panama. The disabling of the aircraft was to deny Noriega one of the many escape routes available to him. Also, the SEALs were tasked with placing obstacles on the runway in order to deny it being used by any other aircraft (Nadel and Wright 1994).

- Means of insertion: The SEALs inserted on 14 x CRRCs (Combat Rubber Raiding Craft, or Zodiac F-470s), towed and escorted by a Special Boat Unit 26 Patrol Boat. This is a much larger force than SEALs typically work with. Originally, the force was designed to be smaller, but additional tasks and security concerns encouraged the assault team to grow to its considerably large size.
- Method of engagement: As the SEALs conducted a hasty patrol (run) from the south to the north end of the runway they were ambushed from Noriega's hanger. Small arms fire was directed at them. They returned fire with small arms and AT-4 anti-tank weapons. A C-130 was dedicated to the mission, but for unknown reasons the AFCCT was unable to establish radio communications (Nadel and Wright, 1994).
- Duration of mission: The mission was intended to be five hours. It turned out to be 37 hours long (Nadel and Wright, 1994).

- Outcome: Three SEALs were killed on the runway with a fourth dying in route to medical care in the U.S. Seven SEALs were wounded, five seriously (Nadel and Wright, 1994).
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: None, the SEALs (and CCT) conducted the mission unilaterally.
- Reason for success or failure: With such a large force (55 SEALs plus Air Force Combat Control Team members), *surprise* was virtually impossible for the force. Paitilla airfield is in downtown Panama City. Such a large assault force, moving in such a confined area, made it impossible to assure surprise. It is believed several Panamanians saw this large force land at the beach and begin their patrol across the airfield (Nadel and Wright, 1994,pp.207-208). In addition to the loss of surprise, poor planning contributed to the failure. Decision makers placed a higher premium on ensuring Noriega's aircraft was not damaged than on the lives of U.S. military on the ground. Originally told they would execute the mission at 0100, the execution timeline was moved one hour earlier, negating the option for a more cautious approach that would have otherwise been used as per SEAL doctrine (Nadel and Wright, 1994). Another possible reason for failure is misuse of force. U.S. Army Rangers rehearse, and routinely conduct, airfield assaults. They should have

been used. Use of a SOF to conduct a relatively large scale conventional (perhaps hyper-conventional¹⁵) mission should be avoided at all times. Vandenbroucke's factor of *wishful thinking* (or as Nadel and Wright address it, "poor assumptions") on the part of military decision makers can also be attributed to the outcome of the mission. There was an underestimation of the enemy's resolve to fight and knowledge of the terrain (Nadel and Wright 1994). The SEALs were put at a terrible disadvantage before they ever launched on the mission.

3. Panama—Operation Just Cause—20 December 1989

- Purpose/Target: The SEALs were tasked with conducting a combat swimmer operation against the Panamanian Patrol Boat *Presidente Poras* in Balboa Harbor. The purpose of destroying this vessel was to deny Noriega a means of escape (Hoyt 1993). (Later in the military action this group was tasked with the capture of Noriega's private yacht (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present, 2004*).
- Means of insertion: The combat swimmer operations was conducted by 4 SEALs, split into two swimmer pairs.

¹⁵ Hyperconventional is a term coined by Dr. Hy Rothstein. The term references forces that conduct conventional operations, specifically DA, with exceptional skill and / or precision (Rothstein 2006).

- Method of engagement: Each swim pair had MK 138 "Haversacks" containing 20 pounds of C4 explosive (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004).
- Duration of mission: The mission consisted of a two-hour dive, with an additional two hours' surface transit.
- Outcome: The *Presidente Porras* was destroyed and Noriega's yacht captured.
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: None, the mission was conducted solely by SEALs.
- Reason for success or failure: There were a couple factors responsible for the SEALs success. One was stealth and use of an unexpected avenue of approach; underwater; in McRaven's words *surprise*. This avenue of approach, unlike the airfield approach, did not allow any observation of the mission execution. Also present was a *sense of purpose* (after all, everyone knew Manuel Noriega was evil) and *simplicity*. The dive profile for the mission was far easier than any dive profile encountered during the SEALs' combat swimmer training. As one member of the dive team described, "Our mission lasted about four hours and was the exact type of mission SEALs train for every day" (Nadel and Wright, 1994, p.205). *Repetition* can also be credited for the success. At the time, SEALs placed a great priority on combat swimmer training. The countless dives of

greater difficulty before this actual combat swimmer operation greatly contributed to the successful outcome.

4. Grenada-Operation Urgent Fury-25 October 1983

- Purpose/Target: In Operation Urgent Fury SEALs were assigned three missions:

1) Secure the Governor's residence in order to rescue Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, and evacuate him.

2) Capture Radio Free Grenada.

3) Conduct beach reconnaissance in support of the U.S. Marine Corps landing at Pearls Airfield.

- Means of insertion: Eight SEALs were parachuted into the ocean with two Boston Whaler fiberglass-hulled boats in order to link up with a U.S. Navy destroyer (Dockery, Navy SEALs, *A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004). Sixteen SEALs fast roped out of Blackhawk helicopters on to the Governor's Residence. The beach reconnaissance in support of the USMC landing was conducted from CRRC "Zodiacs" and two SEAFOX speedboats (Adkin, 1989).

- Method of engagement: As is typical with SEAL, and SOF, operations, they only brought what they could carry or fast rope. This limited their fire power to small arms and grenades. They were able to call in close air support from AH-T1

SeaCobras. The element assigned to capture Radio Free Grenada conducted an uneventful helicopter insertion.

- Duration of mission: The Governor's Residence was expected to take one to two hours. In actuality, because of underestimating the Grenadians will to fight and the fire power the Grenadians were able to mass, the Governor's Residence mission took 26 hours. The beach reconnaissance mission took four hours from launch to mission complete. The Radio Free Grenada mission was expected to take approximately two to three hours (author's approximation based on mission objectives). In actuality, SEALs stayed on target for nearly 24 hours (Nadel and Wright, 1994).
- Outcome: Four SEALs died in initial water jump, due in part to their predicted day jump becoming a night jump and in part to an unexpected squall. The Governor was rescued after a considerable fire fight with Grenadian Defense Forces. In turn, the SEALs were rescued by a Marine armor element. The SEALs conducted successful beach reconnaissance missions which diverted 400 Marines from an amphibious landing to a heli-borne assault (Adkin, 1989). The SEALs who were sent to the radio station discovered it was, in fact, a radio transmitter site. After repelling numerous enemy forces the group evaded to the water. Four out of the eight sent to capture the radio tower were injured. Three additional beach

recons were conducted and several shipboardings were conducted in support of Admiral Metcalf's desire for sea dominance.

- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: None. Three SEAL elements conducted unilateral operations.

- Reason for success or failure: For the most part, Grenada was a failure in leadership and communications. There was extraordinary *overcontrol* by leadership far removed from the area. Also, loss of the element of *surprise* due to delays by Atlantic Fleet played a disastrous role on numerous missions. One of the most glaring failures was the complete *lack of intelligence*, and what little intelligence they did have was seriously flawed (the radio station was actually a transmitter site, the Grenadians had a great will to fight, the Grenadians had much more weapons and capability than reported). Grenada brought to light the insufficient interagency and interservice coordination/cooperation. This abysmal interservice performance, from assets not being able to communicate to units not knowing where each other are, spawned a concentrated effort to increase interservice capabilities.

5. El Salvador

- Purpose / Target: As part of the U.S. strategy for Central America, U.S. military personnel,

including SEALs, were sent to El Salvador to train and advise Salvadorian military in counter-insurgency efforts against the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front).

- Means of insertion: Military personnel would be transported by military or civilian aircraft to El Salvador. Once in country they would travel by 4 x 4 SUVs and helicopter throughout their districts and throughout the country. The personnel were there to work for the U.S. Military Group (MILGROUP).
- Method of engagement: They were trainers. These personnel advised on everything from strategy for senior leaders to small unit tactics for recruits (Willwerth 1983).
- Duration of mission: Personnel would go for one-year tours. Many personnel would conduct multiple return tours.
- Outcome: LCDR Albert Schaufelberger (one of the SEALs who participated in this program) was killed by the Central American Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRTC), a sub-group of Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). He was picking up his girlfriend at the University of San Salvador after her classes. This was a daily routine he had unfortunately followed.
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: The Salvadorian Army and Navy.

- Reason for success or failure: El Salvador as a whole is a shining success story. LCDR Schaufelber's loss was a tragedy. Complacency can be blamed in part for his murder (he kept the same time line and drive pattern, and he removed the bullet proof window because his car's air conditioner was broken). Vandenbrouke's and McRaven's factor do not have relevancy in this case study, as the tragedy may be viewed as personal mistakes. Of note, this may point to the need to have at least two SEALs (or a SEAL and another SOF member) work together to keep each other diligent. SF operators pride themselves on the choice of mature soldiers capable of performing individually in austere environments. It is not suggested that SEALs are not mature enough to accomplish this, but perhaps they work better with a "swim buddy."

6. Desert Storm-Deception Operation-24 February 1991

- Purpose/Target: SEALs were tasked with deceiving Iraqi forces into believing the main U.S. invasion effort would be an amphibious landing into Kuwait.
- Means of insertion: Eight SEALs used CRRCs to get within a practical distance of the shore. They then transitioned into the water to swim ashore.
- Method of engagement: Each man carried a 20 pound Haversack full of C4 explosives. The Haversacks were placed at various intervals on the beach.

Once the timed explosions erupted the SEALs swept the beach with small arms, .50 caliber and 40mm grenade fire.

- Duration of mission: The entire mission took three hours
- Outcome: Several Iraqi divisions were diverted to counter the "amphibious landing" (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present 2004*). This allowed the actual invasion force to move more rapidly than expected and to encounter less resistance than if the diversion operation was not executed.
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: None, mission was conducted unilaterally.
- Reason for success or failure: The SEALs success was gained by absolute *surprise*. *Repetition* is another of McRaven's factors that may be given credit. SEALs frequently conduct over the beach rehearsals. While a standard training mission may not be conducted to emplace explosives on the beach, the concept of clandestine movement up to and on the beach is the same.

7. Afghanistan-Operation Red Wings-28 June 2005

- Purpose/Target: A four man SEAL element was sent to provide Special Reconnaissance (SR) in order to positively identify the enemy personality, Ben Sharmak-(aka Ahmad Shah) (Luttrell, 2007). This

was in order to disrupt enemy activities in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan.

- Means of insertion: The SEALs fast-roped from a helicopter onto a mountain top above the village the enemy was expected to be in.
- Method of engagement: The SR was conducted using high powered optics. Once compromised the SEALs engaged the Taliban forces with their M-4 rifles.
- Duration of mission: The mission lasted two days. For the one survivor, Luttrell, it lasted and additional five days (Luttrell, 2007).
- Outcome: Three of the initial four-man element were killed in the engagement with the Taliban. Eight more SEALs responding as the quick reaction force (QRF) died when their U.S. Army 160th SOAR helicopter was shot down. Eight U.S. Army 160th crewmen died in that crash as well. One SEAL, Luttrell, was recovered.
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: None
- Reason for success or failure: The mission failed because they were compromised. Another factor for failure was faulty decision making once the SEALs encountered three goat herders. It is believed these goat herders alerted the Taliban to the SEALs presence. The QRF failed because the enemy was alerted and was prepared for rescue helicopters flying in during daylight.

8. Iraq-Ramadi-Combat FID-Sniper Overwatch

- Purpose / Target: The primary mission was combat FID. Once the Iraqi force they partnered with was capable, the SEALs took them on combat missions within the city. In the SEAL Team's approach to fully support the U.S. Army's strategy in Ramadi, they undertook a relatively unique mission. The SEALs began conducting patrols to contact. This may be considered a misuse of SOF, but the SEAL Task Unit Commander felt the unique time called for extraordinary efforts (Couch 2008). The SEALs also conducted numerous sniper overwatch missions, providing sniper cover to patrolling SEALs, Marines and U.S. Army. The purpose of these patrols to contact and other missions was to identify and eliminate armed insurgents.
- Means of insertion: The SEAL's targets were all within the city which surrounded their base. Because of this close proximity the SEALs would insert by HMMWV or, preferably, conduct a foot patrol right out the gates of the base (Couch 2008).
- Method of engagement: The SEALs conducted FID with the Iraqi Army, training them for a few days and then go out on combat patrols. When engaging the enemy the SEALs relied on small arms, grenades, and Carl Gustav recoilless rifles. If

necessary, the SEALs could call in Army armor as a QRF or as additional firepower (Couch, 2008).

- Duration of mission: The FID training took about three hours a day. When the Iraqis and SEALs went out on a FID combat patrol, they expected to be out approximately two to three hours. This was extended if the patrol was engaged by the enemy. Sniper overwatch missions typically lasted eight to 12 hours; in a couple cases they ended up being 36 hours (Couch, 2008).
- Outcome: Over the two years it took to control Ramadi, two SEALs were killed, Marc Lee and Mike Monsoor. Working closely with U.S. Army and Marines, the SEALs eliminated *many* insurgents, and permanently disrupted numerous cells. The Ramadi Police and Iraqi Army Scouts the SEALs trained proved to be a capable and effective fighting force. The SEALs' willingness to conduct daytime patrols just as their conventional brethren did effectively developed very close conventional-SOF bonds.
- Host Nation units involved: The SEALs developed and worked alongside the Iraqi 1st Brigade, 7th Division, Special Missions Platoon (Couch, 2008). The SEALs also worked alongside Iraqi Police elements (Couch 2008).
- Reason for success or failure: Flexibility and cooperation were the keys. In building bonds with the U.S. Army the SEALs were able to support

the conventional strategy and greatly contribute to the successes. Analyzing McRaven's tenets, we see three factors contributed to SEAL successes in Ramadi. The first was *security*. Ensuring their planning and objectives were kept quiet and only told to their Iraqi counterparts immediately before departing for the missions ensured success. Also repetition, in rehearsals and in similar missions, promoted efficiency and increased everyone's capabilities. Working alongside Iraqi Police and Army, and establishing a trust and brotherhood directly contributed to building a sense of purpose, both on the SEALs part and on the part of the Iraqis.

9. Iraq-Habbaniyah

- Purpose/Target: Throughout 2007 the SEALs based in Habbaniyah, a town southwest of Fallujah, were given the near exclusive job of training Iraqi Police recruits.
- Means of insertion: There was none. The SEALs lived on the base the training was performed.
- Method of engagement: As trainers, the SEALs worked with the new Iraqi Police training them in marksmanship, small unit tactics, patrolling and close quarters combat. The training was conducted up to five days a week, around six or seven hours a day.
- Duration of mission: Each training class was three weeks long.

- Outcome: In the seven months the author was in country, when the push for increased numbers was the biggest, 1,400 police recruits were trained.
- Host Nation or Third Nation Parties involved: Al-Anbar Police
- Reason for success or failure: Success was generated by both the SEALs and Iraqi leadership. Most of this success can be attributed to a sense of purpose. The SEALs did not particularly relish their job as trainers. They would prefer to have been conducting DA missions, but the mission from Special Operations Task Force WEST, the SOF Headquarters for the west of Iraq, was to train local police forces. Because of this the SEALs took their task to heart and conducted it with great success.

B. MISUSES

SEALs have displayed an impressive ability to adapt to changing environments. This is witnessed in their ability to train more than 1,400 Iraqi Police. The FID in Habbaniyah has been heralded as a great success, but using SOF to conduct basic marksmanship, patrolling and house clearance comes at a cost. When SEALs conduct operations they do not have a comparative advantage in, they are used in a less than optimal way. If the SEALs were unavailable, or there was too great of a ratio of students to SEAL instructors, U.S. Marines or U.S. Army personnel were used. These conventional elements did just as good of a job as the SEALs. In some cases they may have been less capable,

but that could be easily changed by additional preparation. There is a tremendous opportunity cost for using SOF in a conventional role, while the missions the SOF could be doing go undone. As both Christopher Lamb and Elliot Cohen state, SOF is not a replacement for conventional forces, and where conventional forces can be used SOF should not be (Cohen, 1978) (C. Lamb, *Perspectives on Emerging SOF Roles and Missions*, 1995).

The Paitilla Airfield case study from Operation Just Cause also illustrates this point. Airfield takedown is not something SEALs train for. Two SEALs who were sent to conduct reconnaissance of the airfield prior to the invasion recommended using stand off weapons to disable Noriega's jet.¹⁶ For unknown reasons it was mandated that Noriega's jet was not to be damaged (Dockery, *Navy SEALs, A Complete History from World War II to the Present*, 2004), an example of micromanagement and unnecessary constraints put on a force from a far removed decision maker. SEALs can conduct an airfield takedown, and they did in fact accomplish their goal, but at an unnecessarily high cost. The smartest course of action would have allowed the C-130 to simply disable the jet with a single shot. With that option not being allowed another element, Army Rangers, could have been used for this, even though it was an "amphibious operation." Rangers train for just such a mission and should have been the choice once the mission began to grow larger than the capabilities of one SEAL Platoon.

¹⁶ In 1999 the author met one of the two SEALs sent to do this. The details surrounding this may have been lost over time, as no references have been found discussing this proposal.

The failure of LCDR Schaufelberger and that of Operation Red Wings were not misuses of SOF, nor were they failures of the organization. These can be attributed to "operator error" or, more appropriately, as a success for the enemy. Since SOF as a whole work in small elements, the possibility always exists they will encounter or be surprised by a larger, more prepared adversary.

The cases studied further illustrate that, while SEALs can do various missions, their tendency and specialty is to conduct actions aimed at apprehending, engaging or eliminating an enemy. Short duration, direct engagement is the culture of the SEALs and what the SEAL community continues to do better than any other force their size.

C. SUMMARY

These case studies are not all inclusive. SEALs have done numerous unreported jobs and numerous missions that cannot be discussed in an unclassified paper. Furthermore, in Iraq particularly, SEALs are conducting non-kinetic, CA type operations. What do the case studies examined show as successful uses of Navy SEALs?

From the case studies analyzed it appears the most successful missions SEALs conducted were short duration missions conducted directly against the enemy. Many of these cases suggest SEALs have greater impact and operational success when their mission is in support of conventional forces. From the case studies, and the other readings surrounding these studies, it is suggested SEALs are at their best in direct action oriented, physically demanding, and high-risk missions. These case studies show that SEALs have a comparative advantage in direct action over indirect action.

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V. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE; SYNTHESIS OF CULTURE, HISTORY AND TRAINING

A. SOF AND DIRECT ACTION

Undoubtedly for every case study previously mentioned, another Special Operations Force can be cited as doing a similar job. But the argument is not that *only SEALs can do SO direct action missions*, but that *SEALs are the best SOF to conduct such missions*. Chapter III illustrated how the SEAL heritage is based on physically demanding operations and DA missions. A preponderance of their missions have been violent actions directly against the enemy. From this, as well as their training, the direct action oriented culture has become a recognized mainstay of their organization. Other SOFs have established their own cultures and capabilities over the years as well.

The U.S. Army Special Forces, called "Green Berets" are unmatched in their level of cultural and linguistic training (Martinage, 2008). While capable of conducting almost any of the SOF core tasks, including direct actions, they are the recognized leaders in Unconventional Warfare (Martinage, 2008). Special Forces were born out of the World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Personnel selected into the OSS were chosen more on their proclivity to "go native" in Europe than on their physical characteristics. A primary consideration was language fluency, since the major tasking was organizing and interacting with partisan/guerrilla networks within Europe (Simons). Taking its cue from the OSS, Special Forces were originally designed to train, advise and lead guerrilla

forces mainly against the Soviet Union (Waller, 1994). Recognizing the successes of the OSS and its ability to effectively work with partisan groups, language fluency and cross-cultural ability became defining requisites for SF (Simons, p.31).

The Army Rangers can trace their heritage back to the prerevolutionary war period of the King Phillips War and the French and Indian War. Their modern history is from World War II, where they were created as a commando unit based on the British Commandos (David W. Hogan, 1992). The Rangers were periodically decommissioned and recommissioned, always as a highly proficient infantry unit (Kapusta, 2000). In the days of Army draw down, it was thought the Rangers would be the sole SOF retained by the Army, as their proclivity for direct, sustained engagement against the enemy (direct action) was more in line with the conventional army than SF's unconventional warfare (Adams, 1998). Whether they are Elite Infantry or Commandos, the Rangers were recognized as a highly capable U.S. Army Battalion capable of large scale hyper-conventional missions.

B. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

A term originating in the Economics realm, *Comparative Advantage* is often used in the study of Special Operations Forces, comparing the various forces in order to determine who is best suited for specific missions.

As defined by the *Business 2000*, *Comparative Advantage* means: *A (group) should specialize in producing a good (or service) at which it is relatively more efficient* (Business 2000, 2008). To expound on this idea and emphasize the

military aspect of it, the theory holds that organizations should specialize in the execution of missions they can conduct more efficiently than another force. An organization is said to have a comparative advantage in the execution of those missions.

An additional term often seen and used is *Absolute Advantage*. This is when one organization can conduct an activity more effectively or better than any other organization (Winters and Paro, 1994).

Although holding an *absolute* and *comparative advantage* does not guarantee mission success, they provide tangible guidance and conditions for proper use of SEALs or other SOF. It is not espoused that SEALs have an absolute advantage at DA. The argument is SEALs do have a comparative advantage in this mission set.

SEALs and other SOF can all do direct and indirect action missions. But is it wise for all of these forces to be doing all the missions along the Spectrum of Special Operations? Can the likelihood of success increase by an intelligent division of labor? SEALs are selected and trained for direct action, violent missions. Because of their culture, training and history they have a comparative advantage at DA over other SOFs. SEALs have a comparative advantage at small unit, precise, surgical special operations against specific targets. Rangers can do direct action, but they carry a much larger footprint, with less "precision" than SEALs. Additionally, Ranger roles and missions are very much set in standard operating procedures, contributing to inflexibility. SEALs on the other-hand have an inherent flexibility, due in part to

their small unit size. SF can conduct DA, but their training in irregular warfare and indirect action gives them a comparative advantage over the SEALs in UW missions. While SEALs can conduct UW missions, and have often devised ways of solving unorthodox problems, their skills and training are not directly aligned with such action.

If Army Special Forces already exists why should SOCOM and NSW leadership strive to make the SEALs more "SF-like?" This would make both SF and SEALs less effective. They would compete for many of the same resources and missions, at the same time they could be diluting their unique capabilities. If both organizations (SF & SEALs) are vying to be the "Jack of All Trades," they will in essence be experts in nothing. The United States military will have reduced multiple fields of expertise and tactical proficiency in its attempt to make all forces do all things.

C. LEADERSHIP MUST RECOGNIZE THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

The enemies of the United States are using more ingenuity in the ways they attack us. Because of this variety of threats, it is important for the military to maintain a variety of specialized capabilities. To encourage all forces to focus on all threats may result in not being positioned to counter any threats effectively.

The leadership of the various SOFs must recognize each unit's unique comparative advantage and insist that they excel in it. SF has a comparative advantage at UW missions. Special Forces leadership should be the vanguard of reigniting the UW heritage in SOCOM. SOCOM has been dominated by hyperconventional thinkers in recent years but

this should only further motivate Army SF to reinforce their UW roots and maintain it as their primacy (Rothstein 2006). The Rangers have a comparative advantage at larger scale DA missions, to include airfield seizure, raids, movement to contact, and airborne assaults; this should continue to be their primary focus. The SEALs have a comparative advantage in small scale, short duration DA missions. These include raids, ambushes, reconnaissance and maritime missions. For all the reasons stated in the previous chapters, SEALs should be focused on these missions. Having the right force conduct the right mission is the intelligent approach.

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VI. STRATEGIC UTILITY AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

The comparative advantage of an organization gives insight into the most effective way to employ that organization. Chapters three, four and five have demonstrated that the SEALs' comparative advantage lies in direct action missions. Taking this comparative advantage and applying it to the U.S. military strategies of the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy and National Strategy for Maritime Security, which all call for U.S. forces to directly engage an enemy, it is apparent how the highly disciplined SEALs can strategically contribute to the defense of the nation.

A. THE SEAL STRATEGIC UTILITY

This study has illustrated how the comparative advantage of SEALs favors short term direct action missions. This is based on training, culture and previous missions conducted by the SEALs. In addition, they were originally formed to conduct operations around restricted waters, rivers, and canals (NWIP 29-1) contributing to the maritime niche they retain as part of their culture and lineage.

Based on this study, the *strategic utility* of SEALs is as a land and sea based short duration DA force, excelling in raids, ambushes, hostage rescue and HVT abduction. They have the capability to conduct a broad range of SOs, to include FID, civil affairs, and tribal engagement, but that is not where they hold the greatest advantage over other

SOFs. As Admiral Olson, Commander Special Operations Command, stated in his article in Security Affairs, "The direct approach is decisive in its impact" and "Capturing and killing adversaries will always be necessary" (Olson Spring, 2009). There will always a need for DA within SOCOM. For this purpose it is important for the SEALs to maintain this precision capability.

B. RETAIN DA/SR AS PRIORITY MISSION

As long as an active enemy remains on a battlefield, or the United States has adversaries that must be watched or removed, NSW should retain SR / DA as their primary mission. In recent years, SEALs have received some criticism because of their DA focus. This criticism comes primarily from U.S. Army counterparts and U.S. Marine elements that have fully, and rightfully, embraced the indirect efforts of counter-insurgency. As previously stated, a number of military leaders believe the indirect approach is the most useful employment of SOF, and should therefore be the primary mission. But, as discussed earlier, the SEALs come from a culture based on SR / DA. This is where the SEALs have historically placed their efforts, and it is where they should continue to concentrate their efforts, especially considering the enduring requirement to conduct DA missions.

Another reason for NSW to retain its direct action focus is they can provide decision makers with a capable force to fill the gap between conventional forces and Special Mission Units (SMU). When decision makers want to strike an enemy effectively and precisely, but do not want the large footprint involved with conventional forces they

can turn to the SEALs to proficiently execute the mission. Similar to Special Forces in extremis Force (CIF), SEALs are prepositioned around the globe at NSW Units. They can quickly be put into action by COCOMs, without compromising the very special capabilities of the SMUs. Employing SEALs in this capacity provides the COCOM with an additional land and maritime asset quickly to handle important situations with regularly aligned units.

The current Task Unit composition makes the SEALs an exceptionally effective forward deployed force, capable of gathering, analyzing and acting on intelligence. Even though the SMUs have somewhat greater capabilities, it is arguable the SMUs are not as readily available and should be focused on other specific high priority missions. The greatest example of why SEALs provide a force capable of bridging the SMU-GPF gap is their flexibility and ability to respond, which has proven effective in past circumstances. When it was discovered in the spring of 2002 that Zawahiri would be at a medical clinic in Gardez, Afghanistan, it was decided to use a SMU to apprehend him. This decision was made even though a "White SOF" element was only "five minutes away" from the clinic (Vistica, 2004). The delay, resulting from the perceived need to use the SMU for the mission, was ample time for Zawahiri to safely depart the area.

Similarly, a "White SOF" element was denied permission to go to a mosque in Kandahar, Afghanistan to apprehend Mullah Omar. While the team was located at a base just minutes away, U.S. military commanders followed strict

protocol and called in a SMU. Based hundreds of miles away, it took them several hours to arrive in Kandahar. By that time, Omar had disappeared (Vistica, 2004).

C. THE MARITIME NICHE

Two-thirds, roughly 70%, of the world is covered by water (Joint Command, 2008). It is estimated that by 2010 80% of the world's population will live within 60 miles of the shoreline. Currently three-quarters of the world's mega-cities (cities of 10 million or more people) are by the sea (Save the Sea 2006). Such factors make it likely that future conflict will take place within the vicinity of the shoreline. Numerous nations important to the United States have substantial coastlines, to include: North Korea, China, Somalia, Nigeria, Iran and Indonesia. In addition, non-state actors occupy this maritime expanse as well.

Operating within this vast maritime arena are criminal and terrorist organizations, exploiting the sea lanes for both movement of illicit cargo and for hijacking cargo ships. Using fairly simplistic means, such as machine guns, explosive laden vessels, and vessels used as RPG (rocket propelled grenade) and missile launching platforms, terrorist are capable of waging relatively inexpensive and effective war that can have crippling affects on the global economy. (The National Strategy for Maritime Security, 2005).

Areas with political and economic instability, such as coastal regions and littorals in ungoverned or under-governed regions, provide havens for those conducting illegal activities. Criminal and terrorist groups

understand this, and take full advantage of it (Joint Command, 2008). In accordance with The National Defense Strategy, the U.S. military must be prepared to act against these criminals to ensure global freedom of movement and support an environment conducive to international order (Rumsfeld, 2005). With the world's largest navy, it is inherent for the United States to act, when possible, as a regulating force against maritime threats.

One of the tools the U.S. can employ in this fight is the Navy SEALs. Working from the sea or land, SEALs are the ideal force to access areas used by the criminal entities. By conducting SR, emplacing sensors, conducting tagging and tracking operations, conducting personnel apprehensions (or removal), or countering pirates to protect U.S. assets and personnel, SEALs can contribute to the collection of vital intelligence and the cessation of illicit activity around the world.

As previously mentioned, the SEALs have moved away from their maritime roots the past eight years. The foreseen reduction of forces in Iraq is an opportunity for the force to reacquaint itself with their water borne roots. It is possible for the SEALs to retain their capability as a land force, but it is time for them to reinvest in their maritime niche, which was once the essence of their organization.

Early on in their existence, the SEALs established their niche as the maritime SOF. Recognizing they have an established maritime niche, it is imperative SEALs continue to fight to retain that niche (Wilson 1989). To successfully retain relevancy and strategic utility the

SEALs must adhere to James Wilson's tenets for organizational survival. "They must seek out tasks that are not being or cannot be performed by others." "They must avoid taking on tasks that differ significantly from those that are at the heart of the organizations mission," and finally they must "fight organization's that seek to perform [their] tasks" (Wilson, 1989,p.189-190). The introduction of Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) and some of their capabilities threaten the primacy of SEALs as the U.S.'s "go-to" force for special operations conducted from amphibious platforms or in the littorals.¹⁷

The SDV community has never relinquished the primacy of this mission, and they are the recognized experts in NSW undersea warfare. But the majority of SEALs have let this perishable skill atrophy, and their primacy may come into question. The niche is theirs to lose if they do not reconnect with this capability. Now is the time for NSW to dedicate time and resources to return to their maritime dominance.

D. SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE (SFA), TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AND INDIRECT ACTION

The SEALs have demonstrated a capability to effectively support "By, with and though" mission. SEALs have executed hundreds of raids against enemy targets in

¹⁷ The 1st and 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalions (MSOB), under MARSOC, are headquartered at Camp Pendleton, CA, and Camp Lejeune, NC. They are intended for worldwide deployment. Each MSOB is commanded by a Marine Major and capable of deploying task-organized expeditionary Special Operations Forces to conduct special reconnaissance, direct action and missions in support of the geographic combatant commanders (U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command 2006).

conjunction *with* host nation (HN) Iraqi and Afghan forces. In fact, they proved such a capacity towards this mission they were asked to take the lead on training Iraqi forces throughout the al Anbar region in 2007 and 2008.

Prior to September 11, 2001, and afterwards to a lesser degree, NSW forces routinely conducted FID (now being referred to as Security Force Assistance, or SFA) around the world. This gave SEALs practical training in various environments, increased the capabilities of nations friendly to the United States, and proved extremely valuable in times of conflict¹⁸.

Currently in Iraq, SEALs are conducting a great deal of SFA with Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police in Fallujah, Ramadi, Habbiniyah and throughout Western Iraq. When the author was in Fallujah in 2007, U.S. SOF could only conduct bilateral operations. Only in extreme circumstances were U.S. forces authorized to conduct unilateral operations. To meet this criterion SEALs conducted what has been termed "Combat FID;" training counterparts well enough to take them into combat. This differs from other FID or SFA missions the SEALs have done. Previously, SEALs trained HN forces in peace time to increase that HN's capabilities. More recently, SEALs have trained Iraqi forces and sent them off without going into combat with them (the Police Academy in Habbiniyah is an example of this).

¹⁸ SEALs have been conducting Joint Combined Exchange Trainings (JCETs) with the Polish GROM for many years. So when SEALs found themselves working near GROM elements in Iraq, it was a natural decision to conduct combined operations. This improved both forces capabilities and proved a very useful union.

SEALs are capable of this SFA mission, but it is a difficult mission for SEALs. This is not to say they cannot do it; however, even NSW leadership will agree, no SEAL joined to conduct SFA (Williams 2008,p3). Admiral Winters, Commander Naval Special Warfare Command, admits "SEALs joined to conduct SR/DA, and NSW must continue to pursue those important DA mission...but we are going to stay as flexible as the enemy and do what is most important to defeat him now" (Williams, 2008), meaning conduct SFA.

From 2006-2008, the author and many of his peers were assigned to conduct Tribal Engagement activities. Some of these Tribal Engagements were conducted to help a local leader improve his tribe's security or to better defend against al Qaeda. These engagements proved successful and where consistent with the SOF UW methodology. Unfortunately, some of these engagements were solely to "collect environmentals" or to see "If the Sheik needs anything."¹⁹ This may be good practice in conducting a counterinsurgency, but it is not the best use of a SEAL force. If no other force has previously talked to, or is currently engaged with, the Sheik, or there is no possibility for any other coalition force to meet with the Sheik (due to extreme distances from forward operating bases, or other hardships other forces are not able to overcome), then SEALs may be an appropriate force. But to use SEALs to gather environmentals by talking with local leaders when other coalition elements have easy access to the Sheik is a misuse of a limited force.

¹⁹ These were reasons given to the author as well as Task Unit Commanders that worked in Western Iraq after the author left. To "collect environmentals" means to go gather general information about an area and "get a feel" of what is going on.

Still, SFA and tribal engagement is unavoidable for SEALs, but NSW leadership should always be mindful of the SEALs' comparative advantage for DA and only use SEALs for these UW missions when DA missions are not needed or other forces are unavailable. SEALs are a limited force. Because they *can* do most things does not mean they *should* do all things simultaneously. SOF military leadership must recognize this and use these specialized forces wisely. Comparative advantage, specified niches and proven capabilities should be taken into account before other peripheral tasks are assigned to a DA focused force. The question from the introduction to this paper is still valid, "Is this what they *should* be doing, or are they doing it merely because they *can*?" It is vitally important not to use precious resources "because you can," but rather, use them for their greater strategic advantage.

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VII. CONCLUSION

The current battle the United States is in will continue to be a long-term irregular campaign (Gates, 2009). In an article to Foreign Affairs magazine, Secretary of Defense Gates notes the U.S. needs a military that can kick down doors as well as clean up the mess afterwards (Gates, 2009). The military must not overly fixate on the SECDEF's comment of cleaning up, even rebuilding, afterwards. They must maintain a balanced approach and the "ability to kick down the door." It is important for policy and decision makers to remember they should not, and can not, simply exchange a direct capability with an indirect one (Cropsey, 2009). Our enemies have shown adroitness at attacking us where we do not foresee or are unprepared. Because of this, it can be deduced that a concentrated effort by the military in one direction would welcome an attack from the other. If the DoD as a whole overcompensates for their ill prepared irregular warfare capability, the U.S. will find itself challenged by enemies (both conventional and unconventional) who recognize this weakness and are capable of exploiting it (Cropsey, 2009).

SOCOM must retain balance throughout its forces. They must not over compensate and completely refocus on indirect action. Instituting new ideas is not an evil or unwise thing, but must be done with tempered enthusiasm. To over steer too sharply in an attempt to modify the dominant SEAL culture will damage the capacity of SOCOM to expertly execute DA missions across the globe (Cropsey, 2009).

A. A TEMPERED APPROACH

Special operations forces are a strategic asset and must continue to be treated as such (C. Gray, 1999). SOCOM must make tough decisions on how to best prepare these strategic assets for employment. It would be difficult, and foolharded, to argue that the U.S. military only needs a direct action strategy. But there must be tempered realism in the desire to incorporate only indirect action to the strategic outlook of America. A balanced approach is needed (Olson Spring, 2009).

B. WHAT SEAL LEADERSHIP HAS LEARNED

The current war has brought a large amount of attention to the SEALs and has given SEAL leadership a tremendous education in the preparation and execution of war. This knowledge can be leveraged by senior SEAL leadership for future planning. By ensuring they have unparalleled expertise as the maritime force of choice for the military, and by retaining their DA capabilities on land, future campaign and operational planners will have a clear understanding of how and where to use the SEALs. With a clear understanding of the concept of strategic utility, Naval Special Warfare forces will be properly employed in future military actions. This will ensure the missions they perform are appropriate SEAL missions and can have direct and positive effects in support of the United States' National Military Strategy.

C. THE ROAD AHEAD

Terror is likely to remain a threat in the foreseeable future. It may become, like Dick Couch proclaims in

Sherriff of Ramadi, that terror will be similar to illegal drugs, something we never eradicate, but requires constant attention. For this reason, SEALs will always have a mission of removing terrorist leaders and tenaciously chasing terrorists across the globe. This constant vigilance will systematically erode the terrorists' ability to operate (Couch 2008). This task is often seen as the domain of special mission units (SMUs), but SMUs are extremely limited. The "vanilla" or "white" SOF assets, specifically SEALs, can provide a responsive means of dealing with this threat.

Terrorism is akin to cancer. Like cancer there are multiple measures that must be taken to eliminate the disease. Some of the measures are non-invasive. For cancer these measures are nutrition, rest and pharmacological. For terrorism these are the activities surrounding civil affairs, psychological operations, and "nation building." But invasive measures must also be taken and the deadly tumor removed. For cancer this is the work of the skilled surgeon, armed with the scalpel he uses with precision. For the military, the highly trained SEALs are the surgeon and the scalpel. In order to ensure this capability remains a precision tool, SEAL mission focus should remain direct action in nature with a very good understanding of how the "kinetic scalpel of a surgical operation" should be used (Smith, 2009). And just as important, they must understand when a not-so-sharp scalpel can adversely affect the indirect effort. Therefore, this skill must remain as sharp as possible to ensure success (Smith, 2009).

The U.S.'s approach to all future conflicts must be balanced, where both indirect, and direct action are used (Maxwell 2004). The Navy SEALs are a force that has been bred to conduct direct action missions. To ensure this capability remains as precise and reliable as possible they must continue to pursue their comparative advantage and continue to specialize in their DA culture.

APPENDIX

The mission sets unique to SOCOM, or the tasks which SOCOM forces can uniquely conduct in certain conditions and standards are:

A. DIRECT ACTION

These are short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. DA differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives. Activities within DA include the following:

(1) **Raids, Ambushes, and Direct Assaults.** These are operations designed to achieve specific, well-defined and often time-sensitive results. They are sometimes beyond the effective strike capabilities of conventional force elements.

(2) **Standoff Attacks.** These are attacks by weapon systems or through IO. When targets can be sufficiently damaged or destroyed without the commitment of close-combat forces, these attacks can be performed as independent actions.

(3) **Terminal Attack Control and Terminal Guidance Operations.** Using global positioning systems, laser designators, beacons or other means SOF personnel provide

terminal attack control (TAC) to aircraft to grant weapons release clearance. Terminal Guidance Operations (TGO) relay to aircraft additional information regarding a specific location or target.

(4) Recovery Operations. These are operations conducted to search for, locate, identify, rescue, and return personnel, sensitive equipment, or items critical to national security. These operations employ unconventional tactics and techniques, clandestine search, possible indigenous assistance, and the frequent use of ground combat elements.

(5) Precision Destruction Operations. These are operations in which collateral damage must be minimized, requiring highly sophisticated weapons and/or timed detonation of specific amounts of explosives placed in exact locations to accomplish mission objectives. Precision destruction operations can be conducted against targets where precision-guided munitions cannot guarantee first strike success or when the contents of a facility must be destroyed without damage to that facility.

(6) Anti-Surface Operations. These are operations conducted against adversary maritime surface targets. These include, but are not limited to, visit, board, search, and seizure operations, which are shipboarding operations to board and seize cooperative, uncooperative, or hostile contacts of interest (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, pp II-4-II-6).

B. SPECIAL RECONNAISSANCE (SR) WASN'T FORMATTED

Special Reconnaissance are reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. SOF's highly developed capabilities of gaining access to denied and hostile areas, worldwide communications, and specialized aircraft and sensors enable SR against targets inaccessible to other forces or assets. Activities within SR include the following:

(1) **Environmental Reconnaissance.** These are operations conducted to collect and report critical hydrographic, geological, and meteorological information.

(2) **Armed Reconnaissance.** These are operations that involve locating and attacking targets of opportunity, e.g., adversary material, personnel, and facilities in assigned general areas or along assigned LOCs. Armed reconnaissance is not conducted for the purpose of attacking specific identified targets.

(3) **Target and Threat Assessment.** These are operations conducted to detect, identify, locate, and assess a target to determine the most effective employment of weapons.

(4) **Poststrike Reconnaissance.** These operations are undertaken for the purpose of gathering information used to measure results of a strike (Joint Publication 3-05, 2003, ppII-6-II-7).

C. FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE

These are operations that involve participation by civilian and military agencies of a government to assist another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Both conventional and SOF units have a role and capability to conduct FID missions. SOF's primary role in this interagency activity is to assess, train, advise, and assist Host Nation (HN) military and paramilitary forces with the tasks that require their unique capabilities. Successful FID missions can lead to strategic successes for U.S. foreign policy (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, p II-7).

D. UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE (UW)

These are operations that involve a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. UW is unique in that it is a SO that can either be conducted as part of a geographic combatant commander's overall theater campaign, or as an independent campaign. From the U.S. perspective, the intent is to develop and sustain these supported resistance organizations and to synchronize their activities to further U.S. national security objectives. SOF units do not create resistance movements. They advise, train, and assist indigenous resistance movements already in existence to conduct UW, or guerilla warfare, and when required, accompany them into combat. UW includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

(1) **Guerrilla Warfare.** These are military and paramilitary operations conducted by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces in adversary-held or hostile territory. It is the military aspect of an insurgency or other armed resistance movement. Guerilla warfare techniques can undermine the legitimacy of the existing government or an occupying power as well as destroy, degrade, or divert military capabilities.

(2) **Subversion.** These operations are designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a regime or nation. The clandestine nature of subversion dictates that the underground elements perform the bulk of the activity.

(3) **Sabotage.** These are operations that involve an act or acts with intent to injure, interfere with, or obstruct the national defense of a country by injuring or destroying any national defense or war material, premises, or utilities, to include human and natural resources. Sabotage selectively disrupts, destroys, or neutralizes hostile capabilities with a minimum expenditure of manpower and material.

(4) **Intelligence Activities.** These activities assess areas of interest ranging from political and military personalities to the military capabilities of friendly and adversary forces. SOF perform intelligence activities ranging from developing information critical to planning and conducting operations, to assessing the capabilities and intentions of indigenous and coalition forces.

(5) Unconventional Assisted Recovery (UAR). These operations consist of UW forces establishing and operating unconventional assisted recovery mechanisms. UAR operations are designed to seek out, contact, authenticate, and support military and other selected personnel as they move from an adversary-held, hostile, or sensitive area to areas under friendly control (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, pp II-7-II-8).

E. COUNTERTERRORISM (CT)

These are operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism. SOF's role and additive capability is to conduct offensive measures within DOD's overall combating terrorism efforts. SOF conduct CT missions as special operations by covert, clandestine, or low visibility means. SOF's activities within CT include:

(1) Intelligence Operations. These are operations to collect, exploit, and report information on terrorist organizations, personnel, assets, and/or activities.

(2) Network and Infrastructure Attacks. These are operations that involve preemptive strikes against terrorist organizations with the objective of destroying, disorganizing, or disarming terrorist organizations before they can strike targets of national interest.

(3) Hostage or Sensitive Materiel Recovery. These are operations conducted to rescue hostages and/or recover sensitive materiel from terrorist control, requiring capabilities not normally found in conventional military units.

(4) Non-Kinetic Activities. These are actions that are focused on defeating the ideologies or motivations that spawn terrorism by non-kinetic means. These could include, but are not limited to, PSYOP, IO, CA operations, UW and/or FID (Joint Publication 3-05, 2003, p.II-9).

F. COUNTERPROLIFERATION (CP) OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD)

CP refers to actions taken to locate, seize, destroy, render safe, capture, or recover WMD. Major objectives of CP are to prevent the acquisition and use of WMD and their delivery systems. SOF focus on counterforce tasks and conduct CP missions as special operations by covert, clandestine, or low visibility means (Joint Publication 3-05, 2003, p. II-10).

G. CIVIL AFFAIRS OPERATIONS (CAO)

These are activities which enhance military effectiveness by focusing efforts to minimize civilian interference with military operations and limit the adverse impact of military operations on civilian populations and resources. CA give commanders the capability to coordinate and provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance to meet the life-sustaining needs of a civilian population. CA activities include establishing and conducting a military government or civil administration within operational areas until civilian authority or government can be restored. These activities are planned and conducted by CA and involve application of functional specialty expertise in civil sector disciplines normally the responsibility of civil government. CA operations are predominantly joint, interagency, and multinational in

nature and are conducted through or with indigenous populations, authorities and institutions, international organizations, and NGOs (Joint Publication 3-05, 2003, p II-10).

H. PSYOP

These are planned operations that convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of PSYOP is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behaviors favorable to the JFC's objectives (Joint Publication 3-05 2003, p. II-12).

I. INFORMATION OPERATIONS

IO involve actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. IO may be conducted in all phases of an operation, across the range of military operations, and at every level of war. Major capabilities include computer network operations, electronic warfare, operational security, PSYOP, and military deception. Beyond intelligence support, other capabilities include counterintelligence, physical security, information assurance, public affairs (PA), and CMO (Joint Publication 3-05, 2003, p II-12-II-13).

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