

MG Keith L. Ware

Public Affairs Competition

Category C: Community Relations Special Event



7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)
Ribbon Cutting/Open House



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
2929 DESERT STORM DRIVE
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA 28310-9110

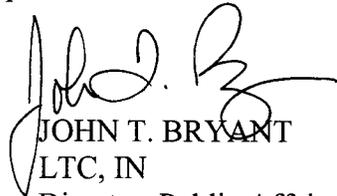
AOPA

15 February 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Community Relations and Outreach Division, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 22202-3905

SUBJECT: Letter of Endorsement, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Ribbon Cutting and Open House Project Nomination, Department of the Army Community Relations Awards Program, Category C: Community Relations Special Event

1. I strongly endorse the nomination of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in the 2011 MG Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition, Community Relations Special Event Category.
2. Over a six-year period, 7th SFG (A) prepared for its BRAC move to Eglin Air Force Base, literally starting from the ground up with building an entire military complex and planning for the move of 5,000 Soldiers and family members into Northwest Florida. The key to the Group's success was building relationships among the local communities and developing partnerships with key stakeholders.
3. The Group's ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was the culminating, formal event to say "thank you" to the 2,500 local citizens who attended the event and with whom the Group had established trust and support. There is no doubt that 7th SFG(A)'s event was a resounding success.
4. Building relationships with local partners and supporters is key to our command's continued support to the War effort. The value of these relationships cannot be measured in dollars and cents; a better measurement is seen in the strong patriotic character of young men and women volunteering to serve in Army Special Operations Forces.


JOHN T. BRYANT
LTC, IN
Director, Public Affairs



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7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Ribbon Cutting/ Open House



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 32542

AOSO-SFB-CD

30 January 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR USASFC(A) Public Affairs Office, Fort Bragg, N.C., 28320

SUBJECT: Endorsement of 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) entry to DA community relations award, Special Event category.

1. I give my full recommendation for the selection of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) for the Department of the Army Community Relations Award for Community Relations Special Event.
2. On October 14, 2011, the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) held an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony in order to officially recognize the unit's historic relocation from Fort Bragg, N.C., to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., as part of the Base Realignment and Closure. The event promoted the capabilities and image of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) across the whole of Northwest Florida as a fully participating member of the community and a professional organization without equal. This community engagement event was truly a world class ceremony and open house that successfully demonstrated the capabilities of our individual Soldiers and our organization through our numerous planned activities; all specifically catered to informing and educating our new neighbors on the Group's missions and capabilities. It most importantly however, afforded us an excellent opportunity to make a great first impression by showcasing the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a world class organization through the professionalism and esprit de corps of our Soldiers, leaders, civilians, and Families.
3. Point of contact is Lt. Col. James Brownlee, Public Affairs Officer, (850)885-7275, james.brownlee@ahqb.soc.mil.


ANTONIO M. FLETCHER
COL, SF
Commanding



2011 MG Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition

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Introduction

After a six year journey, the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) now calls Eglin Air Force Base, Florida its new home. On Friday, October 14, the Group held a ribbon cutting ceremony followed by an open house commemorating the completion of its move from Fort Bragg, N.C. as mandated by Congress in the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act. The intent of the ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was to officially recognize the arrival of 7th SFG (A) to Northwest Florida and establish and maintain positive relationships with local military and community members.

More than 1,000 invitees and their guests attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new 350 acre 7th SFG(A) cantonment area. The ceremony included a parachute demonstration by the United States Army Special Operations Command parachute demonstration team, the Black Daggers; a presentation of the Military Community Covenant, a document signed by military and community leaders representing the commitment to support one another; Florida State Senator Don Gaetz as guest speaker; and performances by two local high school bands who simultaneously played The Army Song and The Ballad of the Green Beret.

After the ribbon cutting ceremony the cantonment site was open to the general public for the open house portion of the event. More than 2,500 community members were presented with an array of demonstrations and displays focused on educating and informing them on the tools and capabilities our Soldiers use every day to accomplish their assigned missions. Our Soldiers shined as they captivated their audiences with live demonstrations ranging from military working dogs, and rappelling from our FRIES tower to marksmanship demonstrations inside our indoor baffle range. Static displays included a six man Operational Detachment Alpha in full kit to military vehicles and heavy weapons to combat diver equipment and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; all were on hand for the spectators to view, touch and ask questions about as well. They also were invited to eat lunch in our new dining facility as they toured our new compound.

The ribbon cutting ceremony and open house were not only a celebration of the completion of the BRAC move, but a "thank you" to the community for supporting the Group through the transition. As if moving more than 1800 Soldiers, 930 Families, 2,300 dependants and over 1300 major pieces of equipment weren't challenging enough, the Group was simultaneously engaging in operations on foreign soil while making the move to Eglin Air Force Base.



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TAB A

RESEARCH PHASE



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Research

As an Army unit moving from an Army installation to an Air Force installation, there was a steep learning curve to integrate our requirements for the ceremony and open house with Air Force requirements. Given a truncated timeline of approximately three months to conduct all the research and planning it is a testament to the diligence and professionalism of the Soldiers and Airmen involved who made this event successful on many different levels.

A significant amount of research was conducted by the Group S2 Intelligence section on the security requirements for the ceremony, in particular for the open house. It was our desire to open the event to the entire Northwest Florida community to participate and enjoy. However, the Army and Air Force, while partners under the Department of Defense, have very different regulations and requirements when it comes to installation security. Only through constant communication, hard work and cooperation were all the security requirements met to make the event successful.

Finally, there was a great deal of research and investigation into the community and its desire to support the unit and the event. Through talking with city mayors and attending several Chamber of Commerce meetings and Military Affairs Council meetings comprised of business leaders in Crestview, Destin, Fort Walton Beach and Niceville, Fla., we found our new (Northwest Florida) community was not only receptive to 7th SFG (A), but they were excited about our arrival and many of our new neighbors consistently offered their assistance with many of our unit endeavors. This research allowed us to identify key community leaders such as the mayors and county commissioners, state representatives, chairmen of non-profit organizations such as the Fischer House, Toys for Tots, Children in Crisis and Military Appreciation Recognition Corporation, who we reached out to with the goal of developing and cultivating a solid foundation for a lasting, positive, relationship for future cooperation.

The 7th SFG (A) also established a Community Engagement Group (CEG) led by the Group Civil Affairs and Public Affairs Officers. The goal of this group is to engage local community, organizations and military organizations to create, strengthen, and preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of 7th SFG (A), Army, and United States Special Operations Command interests, priorities, and objectives through the application of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products of 7th SFG (A) personnel. As well as maintain involvement in and cultivation of these relationships as well as seek out new relationships and opportunities for community events.



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TAB B

PLANNING PHASE



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Planning

Security

The Group S2 Security Officer coordinated with the 96th Security Forces Squadron for opening the gates to the general public and entrance permissions, roving guards and security for entering the 7th SFG(A) compound to facilitate with the open house. The 7th SFG(A) Security Officer assisted the Group Engineers with the development of a security assessment for the ceremony and all associated activities. This assessment included recommendations for road closures and off limit sites. The 7th SFG(A) S2 section also coordinated with 96 SFS for security requirements to conduct all ceremony and open house activities.

USASOC Parachute Demonstration team, the Black Daggers

Coordination for the Black Daggers parachute demonstration team to jump into the ribbon cutting ceremony included the processing of the required request documents and coordinating the drop zone with the 7th SFG(A) S3 Air section, PAO and Eglin AFB.

Demonstrations

Each of the 7th SFG(A) battalions were to tasked to provide a display or live presentation based on their operational missions. We showcased military working dog demonstrations at our 9,944 sf. Multi-purpose Canine Facility, Fast Rope Infiltration Exhilaration System (FRIES) demonstrations from the 40ft. FRIES tower, and weapons demonstrations in our 22,590 sf. indoor baffle range that can accept up to .50 cal rounds and has an air shower for removal of lead dust from Soldiers and a bullet trap to process all lead into removal containers. These demonstrations gave the community an introduction to the capabilities of our Green Berets and showed them how the new facilities at Eglin AFB help to improve upon them.

Static Displays

Our static displays consisted of a six man SFODA showcasing each individual team members capabilities, Ground Mobility Vehicle, MRAP All Terrain Vehicle, Heavy Expanded Mobility tactical truck fueler, Tactical Water Purification System, Unmanned Aerial Surveillance (UAS) Shadow, Chemical Reconnaissance Detachment/ Chemical Decontamination Detachment, Parachute/ Rigger Equipment, Combat Dive Locker/ SCUBA Equipment, Sniper System Equipment. These static displays showed the community the broad capabilities of our Green Berets and the Soldiers who support them.



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VIP/ Center of Influence Management Plan

An all inclusive list of over 500 VIPs ranging from senior military officials, state and local government and community leaders was developed in conjunction with the Eglin protocol office. Once complete this list was used to prepare RSVP invitations, which were then sent to the guests. The guest list was finalized and divided into three groups to manage the VIP tours efficiently, each group consisting of a mix of military and local government and business leaders. Escort officers were assigned to escort the guests on a tour of the new facility. A rotating and precisely timed tour schedule was generated for each group after the ribbon cutting ceremony. Each individual group would receive a tour which included our indoor baffle range, FRIES tower, military working dog demonstrations, and a video presentation about the history of 7th SFG(A) in the Group's 200 seat auditorium.

VIP/ Media Information Packets

Information packets were developed for each of our distinguished VIP guests and media representatives as an introduction to 7th SFG(A). In the packets were a 7th SFG(A) cantonment area fact sheet, command group biographies, a ribbon cutting ceremony program of events, an open house schedule of events and map, a twenty-two page information booklet about the make-up of the 7th SFG(A) and its mission and history, and a multimedia disk containing digital versions of the above items as well as a 5 minute "hooah" video of the 7th SFG(A), a 20 minute documentary about the 7th SFG(A) and photos of the group in action.

Sequence of Events

0900: Black Dagger Military Free Fall demonstration

0900: Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

0902: Invocation/ Unit History

0905: Presentation of Colors

0910: Remarks

0935: Ribbon Cutting

0940: Cake Cutting

0945: Benediction



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0947: Playing of Ballad of the Green Beret/ Army Song

1000: Open House/ VIP Tours

1000 – 1400: Dining Facility Open

1200-1500: Capabilities Demonstrations

1500: Open House Conclusion/ Departure of Visitors

Media Plan: Pre-event

Once the date and times were finalized for the events, a bold and proactive invitation campaign went into effect to let the community know about the open house event. A press release was to be sent to the local newspapers, radio and television stations in the cities surrounding Eglin Air Force Base, FL. The Group's PAO was to contact the local five FM and two AM radio stations to do live radio interviews to invite the public to the event. The PAO was to contact a local internet television channel to promote the event, as well. Coordination for invitations to appear in three local newspapers and on two local television news stations was also done. Coordination with two radio stations to donate thousands of dollars worth of airtime to do live radio remotes during the three hours prior to the start of the ribbon cutting ceremony to generate public interest in attending was to be made. Coordination with a third FM radio station to broadcast their morning radio show live from the event was to be made, as well.

Media Plan: Event

More than two hundred media outlets were to be contacted via email with the press release and instructions to report to a designated media tent where they will be greeted by a public affairs representative prior to the ceremony and receive an information packet. The PAO coordinated with Eglin AFB public affairs office to provide additional personnel to help with media escorting. The PAO worked with the battalions to provide additional Unit Public Affairs Representatives to aid in escorting the numerous media outlets who attended, as well. Each media outlet who attended were to be assigned a PAO representative to ensure their needs were taken care of and they were able to get the information and visuals needed to deliver our themes and messages to their audiences.



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TAB C

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



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Implementation

Security

The 7th Group Security Officer and the Group Engineers developed a security assessment for the ceremony and all associated activities. This assessment included recommendations for road closures and off limit sites. They also provided a threat assessment for the event.

Once the security and threat assessment were complete, the Group Security Officer coordinated with the 96th Security Forces Squadron, who is in charge of Eglin AFB security, to open the cantonment site gates to the general public. They also coordinated with the 96th SFS to provide roving security around the compound to ensure guests were not entering off-limits areas.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Throughout the week prior the event, numerous rehearsals took place ensuring that everyone knew their role during the ceremony and could execute their tasks flawlessly. 3 hours prior to the ribbon cutting ceremony the final preparations for the day's events took place as the VIP tents, chairs, PA system, podiums, were put in place and the final preparations for the demonstrations and static displays were performed. The 3 radio stations setup their live radio remotes and began broadcasting, generating public interest in attending the event.

The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony began with the Black Dagger parachute team conducting a military free fall jump onto the parade field. During the jump, one member of the Black Daggers provided a narrative of the operations and the history and significance of Military Free Fall operations. One jumper carried the ceremonial scissors for the cutting of the ribbon throughout the jump and upon landing deliver them to the center of the parade field, placing them on a designated table. The ceremony then began with the entrance of the color guard, rendering of honors to the nation, and invocation by the 7SFG(A) Chaplain. The narrator gave a brief history of Special Forces and 7SFG(A), to include the significant events associated with the BRAC move from Ft Bragg, NC, to Eglin AFB, FL. Following the history, the major contributors and individuals involved in the relocation of the Group were formally recognized, followed by remarks from Florida State Senator Don Gaetz and the Group Commander. Designated VIPS were invited to the center of the parade field where two Soldiers, one 18 series and one non-18 series, stretched the ribbon across the center of the ceremony area. The Group Commander and VIPS cut the ribbon, signifying the opening of the 7SFG(A) Compound and completion of the unit move to the Eglin AFB community. The ceremony closed with the benediction by the 7SFG(A) Chaplain and the playing of the Ballad of the Green Beret and the Army Song performed by the Niceville and Crestview high school bands. The Group Commander and selected individuals then moved to the flagpole area for remarks and the cutting of the cake.



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Open House

Upon completion of the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, the Open House commenced. Those individuals identified as VIPs accompanied the Group command team and designated escorts for demonstrations and briefings in the Compound area. The VIPs were placed in three pre-designated groups and given tours of the Group HQ and demonstrations at the Baffle Range, FRIES Tower, and Kennel. The three VIP groups rotated between the three sites of the Group HQ, the FRIES Tower, and the kennel. During this time, the general audience public was given the opportunity view static displays set up in the field adjacent to the parade field, enjoy a meal in the Group dining facility, and tour the Group barracks. At 1200, the VIPs completed their round-robin tours and returned to the parade field area to view the static displays and other facilities. The demonstrations continued with three scheduled and posted times for the general public. The Open House continued until 1500 when the Group Commander gave his closing remarks, bringing the day to a close and signaling the time for guests to depart the compound. Upon departure of all guests, the recovery of all personnel and equipment took place until completion, to include inventory and submission of completion report of all sensitive items and components utilized in the static displays.

Press Management

Members of the media reported to the Media Tent prior to the ribbon cutting ceremony. At the media tent they received an information packet and were briefed by a public affairs representative on the ground rules for coverage of the event. They were then given a UPAR who escorted them throughout the ceremony and aided them in getting the information they needed to report on the day's events.



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TAB D

EVALUATION PHASE



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Evaluation

During our planning meetings our metrics for success were based on the three desired effects of community relations (COMREL): attract and retain, (gain and) maintain public support and resource the Army.

Although given a short time line for execution, due to many 7th SFG members still moving to the area and the planning execution of the Group change of command ceremony in July, we were successful, through intense community immersion and research, in creating an event which enabled us to achieve our desired effects of outreach.

To showcase the caliber of our Soldiers and their capabilities we organized numerous events and static displays manned by our Soldiers with the sole focus on educating and informing our new neighbors and community leaders. To ensure our messages to the public and select invitees were being delivered in unison the Group's PAO developed three themes, each with messages and talking points. The themes, messages and talking points were then distributed throughout the Group to each individual Soldier.

The messages resonated throughout the command and proved valuable when interacting with the local high school ROTC programs and the 200 new recruits assigned to the local recruiting company, Montgomery Recruiting Battalion-Dothan.

Our message to them was clear when we stated that the 7th Special Forces Group (A) Soldiers are known for our extensive training and professional maturity; we are highly intelligent, extremely fit, older, more mature and culturally sensitive making us uniquely poised to conduct operations in sensitive and complex environments throughout the world.

When it came to maintaining public support we directed our attention to not only our new neighbors on Eglin AFB, but also to the overwhelming amount of veteran retirees who live in our communities.

Our messages were simple: You - our neighbors – both civilian and military - are vital to us and what we do. We now live in your towns, attend your schools and churches. We are thankful for your welcoming hospitality and look forward to building lasting bonds of friendship. We thanked them and reiterated to them that without the support of our surrounding communities we could not accomplish our mission.

Events like this Ribbon Cutting Ceremony are an opportunity to interact with fellow Americans, and share a little bit of our experiences and recognize the patriotism we all share.



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Opportunities like this gives us a chance to meet our fellow citizens, answer their questions, make friends and build support not only for our Soldiers and Families, but it also builds support for all Soldiers, past and present, who have given so much of themselves for our country.

The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony also presented a unique opportunity for us to personally interact, inform and educate our new neighbors; many of whom were ranking members of our sister services as well as local and state elected officials. We specifically identified these select individuals to ensure they received a (one on one) more in depth understanding of the caliber of Soldiers we have and the importance our resources make when it comes to maintaining our proficiency and success on the battlefield.

The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House was a huge success in our community and a true definition of community engagement. This was a once in life time opportunity for most of the more than 3,500 total visitors to get a first-hand look at Special Forces capabilities and to meet our Green Berets and Support Soldiers who are now a part of their community.

This event has fostered many great relationships throughout our community and with sister tenant organizations on Eglin AFB. Since it was held we have received overwhelming support from local government leadership, as well as state congressional leadership, businesses, non-profit organizations and citizens in general who have reached out to our unit asking how they can support us in any way. Whether taking care of our families while we are deployed or offering property for our unit to use to conduct training, the amount of support we have garnished from our community is positively overwhelming.



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TAB E

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS



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Appendix A

Planning Documents



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Event Photographs



VIP/ COI/ Media Information Packets



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7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)

“Lo Que Sea - Cuando Sea - Donde Sea”



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7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE) FACT SHEET

*7th SPECIAL FORCES GROUP PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA / (850) 885-7275*

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Eglin AFB Construction Fact Sheet

Overview:

Cantonment: The cantonment site is approximately 1 million square feet on a 350 acre site costing approximately \$255 million, consisting of 43 facilities with a growth of six buildings and 150 acres over the next 3 years.

Backyard Range Complex: The backyard range complex is 1 mile to the west, consisting of 7 ranges, with growth of several small projects over the next year.

Distant Range Complex: The distant range complex is 20 miles southeast of the cantonment site, consisting of 5 ranges, with a growth of three ranges over the next five years.

Cantonment Site

Access Control Point: This facility has three lanes of inbound traffic and one outbound lane. It has hydraulically operated pop-up barriers and a visitor's center.

Multi-purpose Canine Facility: 9,944 sf. This facility has room for 14 dogs, team room for handlers, complete surgery and dental suite with a food preparation area. Outside, there is a fenced dog run and space for the portable kennel.

Battalion Operations Facilities: 120,000 sf each. These facilities house the entire battalion under one roof. The back half of the buildings consist of the three line companies and the HSC each with their own arms room.

FRIES Tower: This tower will be 40 feet high and train Soldiers on the proper techniques for exiting MH-47/MH-60 and MH-6 helicopters using movable FRIES bars. It will also have a side of the tower dedicated to rappelling and climbing.

Indoor Baffle Range: 22,590 sf. This facility has 13 lanes, 25m in length and Soldiers can shoot up to 7.62 mm rounds. It has a classroom, control room, an air shower for removal of lead dust from Soldiers and a bullet trap to process all lead into removal containers.

Maritime Operations Facility: 17,132 sf. This facility has indoor storage for 18 x kayaks and 56 x Zodiacs, a maintenance bay, a repair bay (gluing), an open circuit bay and a closed circuit bay as well as a locker room.

Airborne Mock-up Trainers: This complex consists of a C-17/C-130/CASA-212 mock-up trainer as well as a Parachute Landing Fall pit and an open space for sustained trained.



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**7th SFG(A)
BRAC MOVE TO
EGLIN AFB
"FAMILY BUSINESS"**

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- Video: A Long Proud Heritage
- Press Kit
 1. Bios
 2. Fact Sheets
 3. Photos
 4. Publications

The Five SOF Truths

- ✓ Humans are more important than Hardware
- ✓ Quality is better than Quantity
- ✓ SOF cannot be mass produced
- ✓ Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur
- ✓ Most special operations require non-SOF assistance

SPECIAL FORCES AIRBORNE

**7th SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)
1st SPECIAL FORCES**

ANYTIME ANYPLACE

MEDIA KIT

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) BRAC Move to Eglin AFB

For more information please contact:

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Please visit <http://www.soc.mil> and <http://news.soc.mil>
Join our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SFCommand

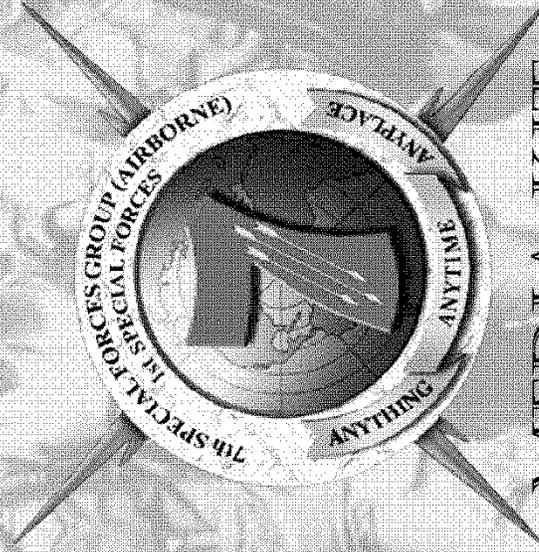


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7TH SFG(A)
BRAC MOVE TO
EGLIN AFB
"FAMILY BUSINESS"



MEDIA KIT

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) BRAC Move to Eglin AFB

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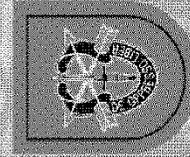
The Five SOF Truths

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- ✓ Most special operations require non-SOF assistance

For more information please contact:

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Please visit <http://www.soc.mil> and <http://news.soc.mil>
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7TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE)

FACT SHEET

*7th SPECIAL FORCES GROUP PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT BRAGG, NC 28310 / (910) 432-8094*

The 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) became one of the U.S. military's most committed forces, spearheading coalition efforts to topple the Taliban in Afghanistan. Since that successful start to the War on Terror, Special Forces Soldiers have been key players in both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, firmly establishing their role as a combat multiplier by accomplishing high-risk missions that are beyond the scope and capabilities of conventional forces.



Every day, 7th Special Forces Group Soldiers remain deployed around the world in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy, living up to their motto: "De Oppresso Liber" — To Free the Oppressed.

7th Special Forces Group consists of a command headquarters element, and three battalions, a group support battalion and a headquarters company. Those companies each have six Operational Detachments-A, better known as ODAs or A-Teams, assigned to them. The 12-man ODA is the heart and soul of the Special Forces regiment.

Special Forces units perform five doctrinal missions: foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, special reconnaissance, direct action and counter-terrorism. Special Forces Soldiers employ these missions throughout the operational continuum, during peacetime, conflict and war.

Special Forces units are often required to perform additional, or collateral, activities outside of their primary missions including: coalition warfare support, combat search and rescue, security assistance, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, counter-mine and counter-drug operations.

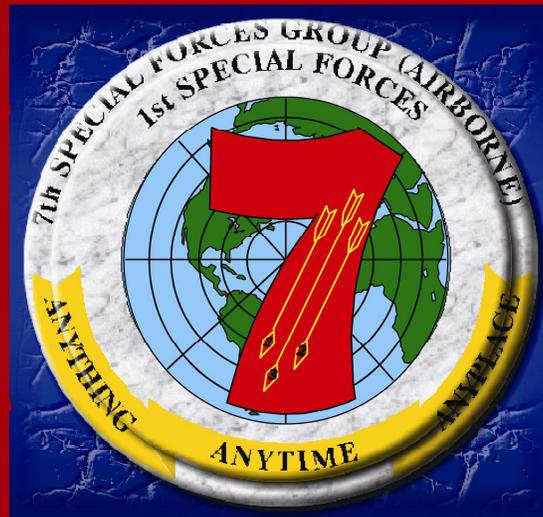


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**U.S. Army Special Forces Command
(Airborne)**



UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO



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Community Relations Special Event Category

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Ribbon Cutting/ Open House



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND (AIRBORNE)

FACT SHEET

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT BRAGG, NC 28310 / (910) 432-6005

Website: <http://www.soc.mil> Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/usasocmil>

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne), or USASFC(A), became one of the U.S. military's most committed forces, spearheading coalition efforts to topple the Taliban in Afghanistan. Since that successful start to the War on Terror, Special Forces Soldiers have been key players in both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The mission of USASFC(A) is to train, validate and prepare SF units to deploy and execute mission requirements of geographic combatant commanders in each operational theater.

Successes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Trans-Sahel Africa, the Philippines, the Andean Ridge, the Caribbean, and Central America have resulted in an increasing demand for SF around the globe as evidenced by the highest number of SF Warriors and special skills personnel currently deployed. Every day, USASFC(A) Soldiers



remain deployed around the world in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy, living up to their motto: "De Oppresso Liber" — To Free the Oppressed.

Special Forces provide partner nations with the tools, training, and capabilities to secure their own borders and provide their own internal stability, thus helping civilized people around the world to live without fear of insurgents, terrorists, and criminal syndicates.

USASFC(A) consists of a command headquarters element, five active-duty SF groups and two Army National Guard SF groups. Each group has three battalions, a group support battalion and a headquarters company. Those companies each have six Operational Detachments-A, better known as ODAs, assigned to them. The 12-man ODA is the heart and soul of the SF regiment.

Special Forces units perform five doctrinal missions: foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, special reconnaissance, direct action and counter-terrorism. Special Forces Soldiers employ these missions throughout the operational continuum, during peacetime, conflict and war. Special Forces are often required to perform additional, or collateral, activities outside of their primary missions

including: coalition warfare support, combat search and rescue, security assistance, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, counter-mine and counter-drug operations.

U.S. Army Special Forces Groups:

1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.
One battalion in Okinawa, Japan

3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Fort Bragg, N.C.

5th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Fort Campbell, Ky.

7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Fort Bragg, N.C.

10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Fort Carson, Colo.
One battalion in Stuttgart, Germany

19th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Draper, Utah

20th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Birmingham, Ala.



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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND (AIRBORNE)

HISTORY

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Special Forces traces its roots as the Army's premier proponent of unconventional warfare from the Operational Groups and Jedburgh teams of the Office of Strategic Services.

The OSS was formed in World War II to gather intelligence and conduct operations behind enemy lines in support of resistance groups in Europe and Burma. After the war, individuals such as Col. Aaron Bank, Col. Wendell Fertig and Lt. Col. Russell Volckmann used their wartime OSS experience to formulate the doctrine of unconventional warfare that became the cornerstone of the Special Forces. In the Army's official Lineage and Honors, the Special Forces Groups are linked to the regiments of the First Special Service Force, an elite combined Canadian-American unit that fought in North Africa, Italy and Southern France.

Special Forces grew out of the establishment of the Special Operations Division of the Psychological Warfare Center activated at Fort Bragg, N.C. in May 1952. In June of 1952, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was established under Col. Aaron Bank. Concurrently with this was the establishment of the Psychological Warfare School, which ultimately became today's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Bad Tolz, Germany in September 1953. The remaining cadre at Fort Bragg formed the 77th Special Forces Group, which in May 1960 became today's 7th Special Forces Group. The intervening years saw the number of Special Forces Groups rise and fall.

Special Forces Soldiers first saw combat in 1953 as individuals deployed from 10th SFG to Korea. These men worked with the partisan forces conducting operations behind the enemy lines. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, teams of Special Forces Soldiers deployed to Laos to work with the Royal Laotian Army. Operation WHITE STAR was the precursor to Special Forces operations in Viet Nam. In Viet Nam, Special Forces teams worked as advisors to the Vietnamese Army and the Civilian Irregular Defense Forces, trained and led quick reaction units called Mike Forces and conducted cross-border operations as the Studies and Observation Group, MACV-SOG. 5th Special Forces Group was formed as the requirement for Special Forces troops grew. In the 14 years Special Forces were in Viet Nam, they established a record for bravery and proficiency second to none.

The three decades following Vietnam witnessed Special Forces participation in virtually every campaign fought by the U.S. Army. In Grenada, Haiti, Panama and in the Balkans, Special Forces teams conducted unconventional warfare operations in support of the regular Army. In Operation DESERT STORM, Gen. Norman H. Schwarzkopf described the Special Forces as "the eyes and ears" of the conventional forces and the "glue that held the coalition together." In the post 9-11 Global War on Terrorism, Special Forces teams were instrumental in establishing the Northern Alliance coalition that ousted the Taliban government in Afghanistan in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and were critical to the success of the Coalition ground campaign in Iraq. In Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Special Forces teams trained and fought with the Kurds in northern Iraq, cleared the western desert of SCUD missiles and provided long-range special reconnaissance to the Coalition ground forces on the drive to Baghdad.

The "Quiet Professionals," Special Forces units are today deployed worldwide displaying their dominance in full-spectrum operations through their unconventional warfare expertise. From humanitarian assistance and training of indigenous forces, to direct action and special reconnaissance missions, Special Forces Soldiers live up to the Special Forces motto: *De Oppresso Liber*, to Free the Oppressed



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SPECIAL FORCES MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES

U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers are experts in unconventional warfare, and within the Special Forces community, individual Soldiers have particular skill sets depending on their military occupational specialties, or MOS. To qualify in these MOS, Soldiers must attend the Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, N.C., which lasts up to two years depending on the MOS a Soldier trains for. After completing the SFQC, new Green Berets are assigned to an Operational Detachment-A, or ODA, at one of the five active-duty or two National Guard Special Forces groups. A typical 12-man ODA consists of these Special Forces MOS:

DETACHMENT COMMANDER (18A): The detachment commander is a captain and has full command authority and responsibility for his detachment. Schooled in the art of unconventional warfare and in the primary missions ODAs may be required to accomplish, these officers also receive instruction on the capabilities of all the enlisted Special Forces MOS to enable them to properly employ their detachments' assets in peacetime, conflict or war. The detachment commander may also advise an indigenous battalion-size combat force.

ASSISTANT DETACHMENT COMMANDER (180A): The assistant detachment commander is the ODA's second in command. He is a warrant officer who has been selected from within the Special Forces community's enlisted ranks.

OPERATIONS (TEAM) SERGEANT (18Z): The Special Forces operations sergeant, better known as the team sergeant, is usually a master sergeant and is responsible for all operational aspects of the ODA. The team sergeant is the ODA's senior NCO and typically is the most experienced Green Beret on the detachment.

ASSISTANT OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE SERGEANT (18F): The assistant operations and intelligence sergeant is usually a sergeant first class and is trained in advanced special operations techniques, including intelligence collection and processing and target analysis.

WEAPONS SERGEANT (18B) x 2: The weapons sergeant is an expert in the employment of U.S. and foreign weapons systems, including small arms, mortars, air defense systems and antitank weapons found throughout the world. The weapons sergeant also employs conventional and unconventional tactics and techniques as a tactical mission leader, and assists the detachment operations sergeant in the preparation of training and operational plans.

ENGINEER SERGEANT (18C) x 2: The engineer sergeant is highly skilled in the planning and constructing of buildings and bridges — as well as in their demolition. His knowledge of construction techniques includes expertise in creating buildings and field fortifications, and the engineer sergeant is also skilled in all areas of demolitions, including land mine warfare and constructing and using improvised munitions. Engineer sergeants plan, supervise and perform all aspects of combat engineering and light construction.

MEDICAL SERGEANT (18D) x 2: The medical sergeant is well versed in many different areas of human and animal physiology. He is a specialist in trauma management, infectious diseases, cardiac life support and surgical procedures. He can also perform basic veterinarian medicine. Medical sergeants provide emergency, routine, and long-term medical care for their teams and associated allied members and host nation personnel. They train, advise, and direct the detachment's routine, emergency and preventive medical care. They can also establish field medical facilities to support detachment operations.

COMMUNICATIONS SERGEANT (18E) x 2: The communications sergeant is the ODA's link to the rest of the world. He is an expert in sending and receiving critical communications to the ODA's command and control elements. Communications sergeants are familiar with cryptographic systems, burst outstation systems, antenna theory and radio wave propagation and common radios found throughout the Army. Communications sergeants install, operate and maintain FM, AM, HF, VHR, UHF and SHF communications in voice and burst radio networks. They advise the detachment commander on all communications matters.



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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND MARKING 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE NATION

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command — the Army component of the joint U.S. Special Operations Command — is among the most diverse organizations in the U.S. military, bringing a broad range of competencies and disciplines to support GCCs and ambassadors worldwide.

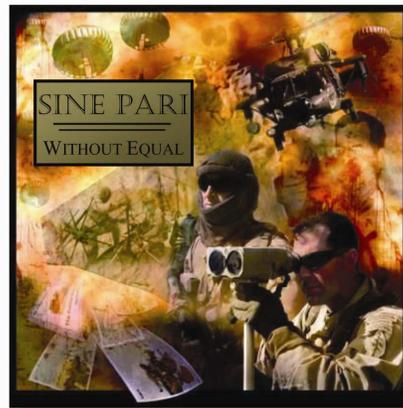
Established at Fort Bragg, N.C. on Dec. 1, 1989 to enhance the readiness of Army special operations forces, USASOC also functions as the Army component of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) located at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

The fundamental mission of USASOC is two-fold: to organize, train and equip ARSOF units and Soldiers, and to deploy them worldwide to meet the requirements of war plans, geographic combatant commanders and ambassadors.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, few elements of the U.S. military have been more involved in the War on Terrorism than USASOC. In Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and numerous other hotspots around the world, USASOC Soldiers have been among the first forces to deploy in support of U.S. and coalition force objectives. Some of these Soldiers are now on their 13th or 14th combat rotation.

With an allocated strength of more than 27,000 personnel, USASOC commands active-duty and is responsible for training and equipping Special Forces and Support units in the Army National Guard.

USASOC has seven major subordinate commands that include the U. S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and U.S. Army Special Forces Command, both located at Fort Bragg, N.C. Located elsewhere are the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga., and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell, Ky. Also located at Fort Bragg are the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, the 528th Sustainment Brigade and the 4th Psychological Operations Group.



On any given day elements of three of the five active duty Special Forces groups, one Ranger battalion, some 34 Special Operations aircraft, more than 35 Civil Affairs teams, 35 Psychological Operations teams and numerous supporting logistics units are deployed around the world.

At the same time, the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School continues training more Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations Soldiers.

The operations tempo of Army Special Operations Forces is unprecedented.

"Regardless of where along the range of capabilities one points, be it the ability to execute the most lethal, highly complex and sensitive special operations, wage unconventional warfare, conduct special operations rotary wing operations, or prosecute civil military and influence operations and tailored sustainment to it all, the world standard is found within our Army's Special Operations Force."

-- Lieut. Gen. John F. Mulholland, Jr., Commanding General, USASOC



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Appendix B

Implementation Documents



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Black Daggers Parachute Demonstration Team



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Military Community Covenant presented by Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Florida Mike Ferguson, Florida State Senator Don Gaetz, 7th SFG(A) Commander Col. Antonio Fletcher, 7th SFG(A) Command Chief Warrant Officer Heriberto Serrano and 7th SFG(A) Command Sgt. Major Brian Edwards



Ribbon Cutting with 7th SFG(A), Eglin Air Force Base, Air Force Special Operations Command and Community Leaders



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Almost 700 Niceville and Crestview High School Band members simultaneously perform the Army Song and the Ballad of the Green Beret.



Special Forces Capabilities demonstrations were presented in our indoor baffle range.



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Military Working Dog demonstration



Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha capabilities display



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FRIES and Rappelling demonstration



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Tactical Military Vehicle Displays



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Chemical Decontamination Display



UAV display



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Combat Diver Propulsion Device and Kayak display



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Appendix C

Evaluation Documents



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Newspaper Articles

BRAC journey ends, Dedication of new Headquarters and Complex

Niceville.com

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE FL. The U.S. Army's 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) will hold an invitational ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new headquarters complex here Friday, Oct. 14, at 9 a.m., – completing six years of planning and construction.

Colonel Antonio M. Fletcher, the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) commander, will host the ribbon-cutting ceremony signifying the Group's arrival and the commencement of operations at their new location.

The 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) moved from Fort Bragg to Eglin AFB to comply with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure legislation. BRAC directed their relocation here to Eglin AFB from their former home at Fort Bragg, NC. not later than Sept. 15, 2011.

The ceremony will be held on Meadows field, which is directly in front of the Group's new state-of-the-art 68,500 square-foot command headquarters. The entire cantonment sits on a 350 acre site which houses 43 facilities with a combined approximate 1 million square feet.

At 10 a.m., immediately following the formal portion of the ceremony, the public will be welcomed into the cantonment area where they will have the opportunity to tour the facilities and view live demonstrations by the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldiers. There will also be various static displays of vehicles and the state of the art equipment used by the Special Forces Soldiers.

Beginning at 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., the Group would like to welcome everyone to join them for lunch in their new state of the art dining facility; the price per person is \$4.25.

The 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is one of the Army's elite units specializing in unconventional warfare. Their willingness to accept the danger, isolation and hardships inherent to their mission helps define Special Forces. Their dedication to task is expressed in the Special Forces motto: **De Oppresso Liber— To Free the Oppressed.**

[http://niceville.com/Forums/showthread.php?1166-7th-Special-Forces-Group-\(Airborne\)-Open-House](http://niceville.com/Forums/showthread.php?1166-7th-Special-Forces-Group-(Airborne)-Open-House)



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Special Forces to hold open house to mark completion of move

September 29, 2011 7:45 PM

Mona Moore

Daily News

EGLIN AFB — Residents will get a peek into the world of the Army 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) on Oct. 14 when it opens its gates to the public.

“This is going to be a rare opportunity for the community to come out,” said Maj. James Brownlee, a spokesman for the Special Forces Group.

He said the group will have security in place but give non-military access to the most of the 350-acre cantonment.

Activities begin with an invitation-only ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9 a.m., when bands from Niceville and Crestview high schools will perform.

Gates will open for the general public at 10 a.m.

The troops will offer tours, demonstrations and displays. Officials suggested bringing sunscreen and strollers for the all-day outdoor event.

Dining facilities will be open. Brownlee said the menu would include everything from barbecue to seafood for \$4.25.

The event marks the completion of the BRAC-initiated move from Fort Bragg, N.C., to the group’s new home at Eglin Air Force Base. The Army made its Sept. 15 deadline to relocate most of the 1,800 personnel associated with the unit.

More than 4,000 people (1,650 military personnel and 2,370 dependents) are now Northwest Florida residents. That includes nearly 1,000 Army families.

“... When you add in the 4th Battalion, we’re going to gear up 2,200 (personnel),” Brownlee said.

The arrival of the new battalion and regional support detachment are not related to BRAC, but was initiated by the Army Special Forces Command. Barracks for the 4th Battalion are still under construction.



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Brownlee said unmarried soldiers who are E-5 (sergeant) or below are required to live in barracks. About 100 soldiers occupy the three completed barracks.

In addition to the barracks, a new shoppette, medical center, convenience store, gas station and barber shop are still under construction. Workers also recently broke ground for the chapel.

Brownlee said construction of the cantonment cost \$500 million.

Soldiers are still settling in to the area and finding their way around. Brownlee found his waterfront home in Cinco Bayou and said it was an enjoyable move.

“The majority of people are not only glad we’re down here but they love it,” he said. “We’ve had a lot of help because everybody has bent over backwards to help.”

<http://www.nwfdailynews.com/articles/hold-44022-bragg-house.html>



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It's official: Army 7th Special Forces Group has arrived

October 14, 2011 6:03 PM

Dusty Ricketts

Daily News

EGLIN AFB — Northwest Florida residents have put out the welcome mats for the Army 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) since it was learned six years ago the unit would relocate here from Fort Bragg, N.C.

On Friday, the Special Forces reciprocated by opening its doors to the public with a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by an all-day open house.

“Northwest Florida gets it. We get it,” Gaetz said. “We understand what you mean when you talk about the family business and we are now your family. As the senator for Northwest Florida, I make you this promise: You will never live in a place more military friendly than this. Your children will never go to better schools than these. No one will ever try harder than we will to find your spouse a job. No community will appreciate you more, and as long as you are here all of your relatives from up north will never leave you alone in the winter.”

Nearly 1,000 people attended the ribbon-cutting. The 7th Special Forces expected 2,500 to 3,000 people to attend the open house throughout the day.

The unit had been based at Fort Bragg since 1960 before the Base Realignment and Closure Act mandated that it had until Friday to move its operations to Eglin Air Force Base. The open house was held to celebrate the conclusion of the move.

Col. Antonio Fletcher, commander of the 7th Special Forces, said he was proud his group was the only BRAC unit to make the move while also undergoing significant contingency missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Latin America. He said that on any given day, between 300 and 500 soldiers from the 7th Special Forces were deployed around the globe during BRAC initiatives.

“We are overjoyed to be in the Emerald Coast and live as your neighbors,” Fletcher said. “For 50-plus years we called Fort Bragg home, and the bonds of our personal friendships and the connections throughout the countless Carolina communities ran extremely deep. In retrospect, six years ago when Congress mandated our move to Eglin, it was received with a bit of angst and nervous anxiety.



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“Your smiling faces, unconditional community support, the Emerald Coast weather, world class facilities and unprecedented training opportunities quickly erased those fears,” Fletcher added. “This unparalleled blend provides this exceptional unit with a unique opportunity to focus on what matters most: training for our soldiers and caring for their families. We look forward to writing the next chapter in the 7th Group’s proud legacy with the Emerald Coast neighbors.”

After the short ceremony, which included demonstrations of soldiers performing High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) parachute tactics, the Special Forces opened a large portion of its compound to the public. There were demonstrations and booths that displayed weapons and equipment, as well as land, sea and air vehicles.

Once complete, the compound will contain 47 structures spanning more than 1 million square feet with more than 500 acres of training area. The square footage alone is three to four times larger than what the 7th Special Forces had at Fort Bragg, Fletcher said.

“Its inherent operational capacity is unmatched in the world,” Fletcher said. “With 12 different ranges, a multipurpose canine training facility, a rappelling and fast-rope tower, an indoor shooting range, maritime operation facility, an airborne trainer, ample combat vehicle storage, a medical clinic, a dining facility, a fitness training facility, a chapel, a gas station and living quarters for our single soldiers. What more could you ask for? This is indeed the premier Special Forces training facility in the inventory.”

Wayne Harris, executive director of the Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce and an Okaloosa County commissioner, said the presence of the 7th Special Forces will have a phenomenal impact on the community.

“This is historic in the fact we are truly more purple-suited at Eglin Air Force Base than we’ve ever been before,” Harris said. “It’s an opportunity not just for the bases, but for the community to make us more profound in the inventory of the DOD.”

<http://www.nwfdailynews.com/articles/eglin-44496-video-forces.html#ixzz1izWDX03A>



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7th Special Forces open house (photo gallery)

By Brian Hughes | brianh@crestviewbulletin.com October 19, 2011 9:40 AM

The grateful, the curious, the young and the old turned out to welcome members of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and get a peep at their new base during a public open house Friday morning.

Veterans mingled with active duty personnel and marveled at equipment, while politicians beamed and youngsters eagerly mounted machine gun turrets.

The day began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and presentation of the Army Covenant to leaders of Emerald Coast communities, including Crestview Mayor David Cadle. The ceremony marked the official end of the BRAC-mandated move of the 7th Special Forces to their brand new cantonment just south of town.

“Thank you for being here. Thank you for choosing here. Welcome home!” state Sen. Don Gaetz said to applause. “We’ve been waiting for you!”

Gaetz praised the more than 500-acre cantonment that rose up from the pine forests and sand scrub over the last two years.

“You don’t have to share it with anyone but some black bears, some alligators and some snakes,” Gaetz said. “But they’ll give way when they find out the Devil’s Brigade is here,” he said, referring to the nickname the group earned soon after it was formed during World War II.

“We’re overjoyed to be on the Emerald Coast and living as your neighbors,” group commander Col. Antonio Fletcher replied. “BRAC may have brought us to your doorstep, but it’s your hospitality that opened those doors.”

Dignitaries officially opened the complex by snipping a red ribbon with oversized scissors dropped in by Black Daggers HALO (high altitude, low opening) parachutist Sgt. Kelly Becker.

The Crestview High School band joined the Niceville High Eagle Pride band as more than 500 musicians proudly played “The Ballad of the Green Beret” and “The Army Goes Rolling Along,” the service’s official anthem.



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A beautiful fall day added to the carnival-like atmosphere as visitors explored static displays of equipment and vehicles arrayed along the perimeter of the grassy parade ground that fronts the 7th Special Forces' headquarters building.

"I can't believe this," Crestview resident Bea Steele said as he and his brother Pete looked around some of the more than 40 buildings that make up the cantonment. The three-mile entrance road itself impressed the men.

"I told Pete we're going to be in Holt in a minute," Steele said with a laugh.

"It's just wonderful that they're here," Lola Becker, also of Crestview, said as she and her husband Louis visited with soldiers and admired the equipment on display. Indicating a drone aircraft mounted on its launching track, Louis Becker said, "The amount of lives they can save with this thing is tremendous, they told us."

"We're so impressed with this," Erika Moreno, another Crestview resident, said as she gazed at displays with her husband, David Colon. "The technology is beyond amazing, and it's right in our backyard!"

Locals were unanimous in their praise for the personable, polite soldiers they met, and were effusive in their admiration for the work their new neighbors perform for their country.

"What's amazing is how young many of these guys are," Walmart manager Pat Riley observed. "Some of them are kids, but they're serving in Afghanistan, South America and Iraq."

Riley also said the arrival of the group's 1,800 soldiers, along with 930 families and more than 3,000 dependents, has made an observable impact on his store's trade.

"Business has been real good thanks to these guys," Riley said.

"We talked to several of the Army boys and they all live in Crestview," Louis Becker added. "They're all good boys."

"Northwest Florida gets it," Gaetz said in his remarks to the group. "No community will ever treat you better."

"We look forward to writing the next history of the 7th Special Forces Group with our Emerald Coast neighbors," Fletcher said.



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<http://www.crestviewbulletin.com/articles/house-15689-open-7th.html>

Television News

WEAR 3 ABC Pensicola, FL

7th Special Forces

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE - The Army's 7th Special Forces Group can officially call Northwest Florida home.

Today the Army recognized the start of the group's new home on Eglin Air Force Base property just south of Crestview.

Channel Three's Bill Pearson tells us why this is such an important milestone for the Army and our community.

Bill Pearson/Reporting said, "This is just one of several heavy-duty pieces of equipment on display here at the ribbon cutting and open house for the 7th Special Forces Group. It's an opportunity for the local community to come out and say hello to their newest military partner."

And with that the Army's 7th Special Forces Group began its new era of calling Northwest Florida home.

And what better way to introduce your group to the community than by showing off some of your skills.

Charlotte Gibson/Impressed with 7th SFG said, "This is phenomenal. What goes on in here, it's just unbelievable. Never would have thought such things existed. That kind of weaponry, the demonstrations on the field are just phenomenal. The equipment (that's) available."

At least 2500 civilians from around our region came out for this open house. And they were treated to quiet a show...

James Webb/10 Year Old from Crestview said, "You could see them coming down like that like a cliff, then on one side like a helicopter and they came down flat, with their belly down, that was really cool. I would thank them very much for helping protect us."

The 7th Special Forces Group was forced to move here by the last round "Base Realignment and Closure."



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These new facilities greatly improve the group's ability to train and it will pump millions of dollars into our region's economy.

But for many civilians they're just impressed with what our newest neighbors can do on the battle field.

Charlotte Gibson said, "You have no idea that they can move that fast, and be so accurate. Thank God they're on our side!"

Bill Pearson/Reporting said, "From what we learned out here on Friday everyone from military leadership to community leaders from across Northwest Florida say this is a partnership that will benefit both sides for generations to come.

http://www.weartv.com/template/cgi-bin/archived.pl?type=basic&file=/newsroom/top_stories/videos/archive/2011/10/9SMgzgbD.xml