

# ARMY

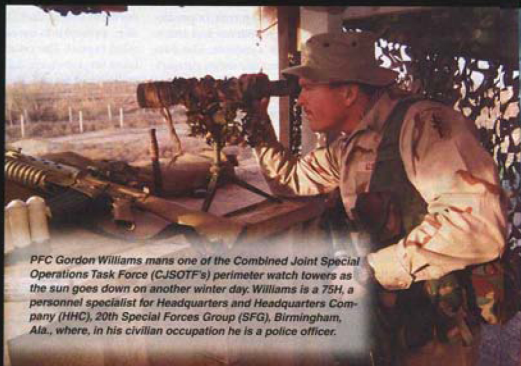
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# The Guys Behind the Green Berets



PFC Gordon Williams mans one of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF's) perimeter watch towers as the sun goes down on another winter day. Williams is a 75th, a personnel specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHQ), 20th Special Forces Group (SFG), Birmingham, Ala., where, in his civilian occupation he is a police officer.

Sgt. Jeremy Romine burns classified material at the CJSOTF. Romine, an intel specialist in 20th SFG(A), was a recent Special Forces Assessment and Selection graduate and is headed to the Special Forces Qualification Course to become an 160 Special Forces medic. He graduated from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, with a degree in chemistry just before deploying to Afghanistan with 20th Group.



An important part of CJSOTF operations is keeping the variety of vehicles up and running. Spc. Craig B. Hart, a mechanic with 1st Battalion, 20th SFG in Huntsville, Ala., works on one of the camp's fleet of Humvees. The group mechanics are responsible for maintaining all the vehicles within the CJSOTF as well as the Green Beret teams' vehicles throughout the country, which means making "house calls" with their tools to remote parts of Afghanistan. In his civilian life, Hart is a college student in Huntsville.

Text and Photographs By SFC Paul Avallone

Since Vietnam, the Green Berets have played important, mainly behind-the-scenes, parts in America's foreign policy, encompassing places like Central America, the Balkans, Africa, the Far East and the Middle East. The vast majority of the Green Beret missions have mainly involved training and building up foreign armies, with rare combat roles, such as in El Salvador, Panama and Desert Storm. It was not until the war in Afghanistan—the opening of Operation Enduring Freedom—that, as they had early in the Vietnam War, the



Sgt. Wayne Underwood has the job of seeing that enough medicines are in stock for the 500 personnel of the CJSOTF and for the Operational Detachment Alphas and their support personnel at the firebases throughout the country. Underwood is a member of 20th SFG Support Company in Birmingham, Ala. He lives in Auburn, Ky., where he is a maintenance technician for the Logan Aluminum Company.





Green Berets were again on center stage as the lead fighting force. Special Forces teams from the active duty 5th Special Forces Group (based at Fort Campbell, Ky.) infiltrated Afghanistan within a month of 9/11 and joined the various Northern Alliance forces, leading to the rapid defeat of the Taliban and al Qaeda in less than two months.

SSgt. Mike Belcher mans the guard shed at the entrance to the forward operating base (FOB) at K2 (Karshi Khanabud), Uzbekistan. A secure encampment with limited access, the FOB is open only to those authorized. Guard duties are rotated throughout the enlisted personnel. As a rigger for 1st Battalion, 20th SFG, Belcher was responsible for all airborne resupply missions to the battalion's Special Forces teams deployed in Afghanistan.



At the CJSOTF in Bagram air base, Afghanistan, Capt. Kelvin Whisenhunt (left), Sgt. Steve Osborne (center) and Sgt. Gary Pounders (right) tweak a satellite antenna to get maximum gain for broadcast to U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C. All three are members of 20th SFG Support Company, Signal Detachment, Birmingham, Ala., of the Alabama National Guard. In his civilian profession, Whisenhunt is a molecular biologist in research at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga. Osborne is a police officer in the town of Villerica, Ga. In the Atlanta region, Pounders is a police officer in Huntsville, Ala. The guys of the Sig Det are responsible for keeping 24-hour communication links open between the dispersed Green Beret teams scattered through the country as well as links with Central Command, theater command and stateside Special Forces command.

SFC PAUL AVALLONE has been a Green Beret since 1978, serving with the 7th, 12th and 20th SFGs.

In the two years since then, Green Beret teams stationed in the remote areas throughout Afghanistan have been securing the peace while continuing to hunt for the remnants of al Qaeda and Taliban, which still threaten the country.

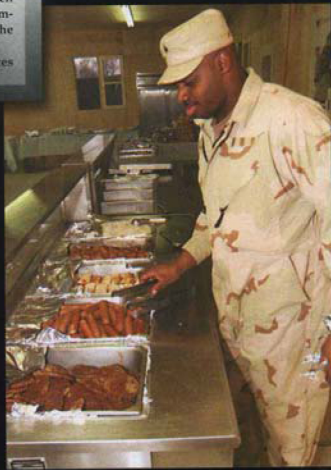
Battalions from the active duty 3rd Special Forces

Sgt. Wendell Perry, 20th SFG mess section, makes final preparations on the food line just before opening the dining facility for dinner. As one of a small staff that feeds more than 500 soldiers in the CJSOTF, two hot meals a day, Perry is a member of Group Support Company, 20th SFG(A), Birmingham, Ala. In his civilian job, he is a John Deere mechanic.



Above, Spc. Terry Phillips and Sgt. John Roth gather the mail during the Christmas season. Roth and Phillips were responsible for the entire battalion's mail—not just the men of the FOB at K2, but also all the Green Berets of the teams deployed downrange in Afghanistan. It took a tremendous effort, especially during the Christmas rush, to get the thousands of pounds of mail onto pallets and airlifted to the dispersed teams in Afghanistan.

Right, SSgt. Lonnie England, a mechanic with Group Support Company, 20th SFG (A), zips around on a Polaris Sportsman on his rounds through the vehicle repair yard at the CJSOTF Bagram air base. The six-wheeler makes it easier in all weather, including the snows of winter, to haul tools and equipment. England lives in Birmingham, Ala., where, as a civilian, he is a mechanic at the U.S. Steel mill.







Capt. Michael Perry, 1st Battalion, 20th SFG, S-2 at FOB K2, Uzbekistan. He is in charge of the battalion intelligence section and responsible for all the intelligence gathering and dissemination for the deployed Green Beret teams in Afghanistan.

A supply sergeant with B Company, 1st Battalion, 20th SFG, Sgt. A.D. Miller normally spends all his time cooped up in the rear making sure the Green Berets downrange have the gear and ammo they need. For his good work, Miller was invited to join a team in rural Afghanistan to experience life on the ground as a Green Beret. First stop: a camel ride. Next stop: Miller plans to attend the Special Forces Assessment and Selection in an attempt to become Special Forces-qualified.



SSgt. Walter Wielechowski stands guard duty over Afghan workers hired as day laborers for various jobs in the CJSOTF. Wielechowski is with the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, in Mattdale, N.Y. Though the civil affairs battalions do not fall directly within the Special Forces groups, they are sister units, as civil affairs and Special Forces work hand-in-hand in the postcombat rebuilding of a country. In Afghanistan, the civil affairs detachments fall under the command of the CJSOTF, which is commanded by the SFG commander, a colonel.



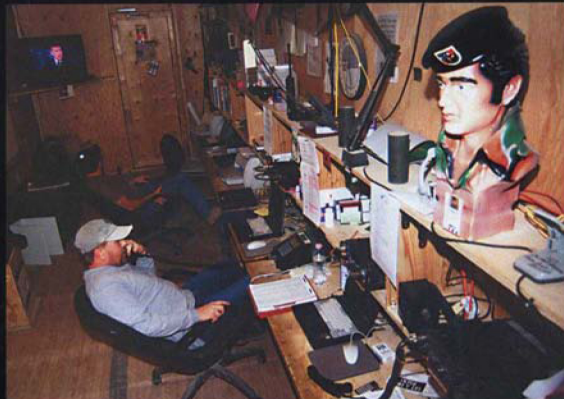
Group (Fort Bragg, N.C.) and the National Guard's 19th and 20th Groups (based in Colorado and Alabama, respectively), have followed 5th Group on a rotational basis in Afghanistan.

While it is the Green Berets who appear on the front pages—both in written accounts of their actions and in

photographs—it is the guys behind them who make it all possible. Someone has to supply the teams the intelligence, the beans and bullets, the pay and the mail. It may be the 12-man Special Forces teams hunting and finding Taliban arms caches in eastern Afghanistan, but the teams depend on the guys supporting them and seldom

At FOB K2, Elvis Presley stands watch over battalion radio operators Sgt. Jeff Knowles (near) and Sgt. Jim Crabb (far) in the signal center, as the evening news plays on the satellite television. Responsible for keeping lines of communications open 24 hours a day with the more than 20 battalion Green Beret teams downrange in Afghanistan and the higher command CJSOTF at Bagram air base,

the operators work 12-hour shifts, but Elvis never sleeps. The bust of Elvis has been a signal tradition for at least 15 years, deploying on stateside and overseas training missions.



Signal centers of the 21st-century Army are as computer-dependent as they are radio-dependent, even when they are based out of tents, as they are at the CJSOTF in Bagram air base, Afghanistan. Maj. Huey T. Haymon, J-6, responsible for command, control and communications, checks operations on one of the two computers at his desk. Haymon is a long-term member of the 20th SFG. He is an electronics technician and makes his home in Huntsville, Ala.





A paramedic in his civilian occupation, Sgt. Mark Hawley spent many weeks deployed with the Green Beret teams in Afghanistan, helping the teams perform medical missions in rural villages that have no clinics or doctors. Below, Hawley does the initial examination of a little boy complaining of severe throat pain.



SSgt. Jim Kelly and Sgt. John Wilson, supply sergeants with 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces, make the rounds in the snow of K2 in a John Deere mule.



SSgt. Mike Boston of the battalion S-4 drives a 12-ton forklift to move resupply pallets from the staging area at K2 to an aircraft for movement to Green Beret teams downrange in Afghanistan.



not unlike the support personnel of the other six Special Forces groups, both active duty and Guard. As airborne soldiers, they all wear a beret other than the Army standard issue black one—theirs is maroon—and in the seven months that these soldiers recently spent deployed to Afghanistan and Uzbekistan for Operation Enduring Freedom, they were the “guys behind the Green Berets.”

Deployed for nine months in Afghanistan with several Special Forces teams, Reservists (left to right) Spc. Travis Mastin, Sgt. Jason Fuchs and SSgt. Rob Bell participated as an integral part of the Tactical Psycho-ops Team (TPT) responsible for all psychological operations. Here, the TPT provides overwatch along

with Afghan militia forces during a patrol in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan.



In the CJSOTF at Bagram air base, the living quarters are tents; the latrines are out-houses, and the showers are mobile connexes. The morale and welfare of the troops are greatly improved with the installation of hot water for bathing and washing clothes. Maintenance workers, Spc. Josh Cawl (left) and Spc. William Moorehead (right), make sure the hot-water heating system is up and running 24/7. Both are from the 777th Maintenance Company in Nashville, Tenn., and were mobilized as part of the active duty Special Forces support unit, the 528th Support Battalion in Fort Bragg, N.C.

