

Distinctive Beret Uniform History of U.S. Armed Services

Actively knowing authorized distinctive beret uniforms is exclusive to the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force allows better consideration and realization of what a distinctive beret uniform may be or not be recognizing and symbolizing.

Still another important consideration for correctness of familiarity is wear of beret with a U.S. military department's service uniform was a rarity prior to the Army adopting the black beret as standard wear with its service uniform effective 14 June 2001. Only Black, Maroon (airborne), Green (Special Forces), and Tan (Ranger) Berets are currently authorized headgear for wear with the Army Service Uniform.¹ The Air Force currently authorizes Scarlet (Combat Control/Special Tactics Officer), Maroon (Pararescue/Combat Rescue Officer), Blue (Security Forces), Pewter Green (SERE), Pewter Gray (Special Operations Weather and Combat Weather parachutists), Black (Tactical Air Control Party and Air Liaison Officers) as head gear for wear with Air Force Service uniform.

Understanding the complexity preference of how the different US military departments authorize distinctive beret, badges or insignias shows characteristics and capability is attributed to the group and not to the individual. The occupational badge, occupational insignia and unit patch can and is often as effective in garnering respect and reputation the group has collectively earned in the same way distinctive beret worn with Service uniform does.

The US Navy SEALs is an example of a group the public has awareness of being elite that although has never been authorized wear of a distinctive beret uniform does have a distinctive badge that is held in high respect. USMC Force Reconnaissance is an example of a group the public has awareness of being elite that completely lacks distinctive uniform head gear and distinctive badges that establishes them apart from other Marines. The Navy/Marine Corps parachutist insignia and the combatant diver insignia is typically, if worn, the only badges worn on Service uniform indicating the Marine is likely a member of a Force Reconnaissance unit. This gives certainly-so evidence other devices such as the Navy Special Warfare Insignia (badge) represents both completing specific qualification training and identifies a group of highly trained military professionals sustaining and providing a unique tactical capability. Consequently the favorable results of respect and recognition is collectively earned and the distinctive beret uniform or other authorized badge or insignia is the result of providing a dependable, reliable, effective tactical capability.

Prior to 1973 only the Army's Special Forces and Air Force's Pararescue had official military department (HQ Army/HQ USAF) approval to wear a distinctive beret service uniform on and off base, both while on-duty and off-duty.

Army leaders were so opposed to giving distinctive uniform concessions that it took a President Executive Order in 1961 for members of the U.S Army Special Forces to gain approval and authorization to wear the Green Beret. The Department of the Army made its second distinctive beret uniform concession in 1975 when the U.S Army Rangers were authorized wear of the black beret (Tan effective 15 June 2001).

Air Force leaders were also tenaciously hesitant of giving distinctive uniform concessions to groups as authorizing such was not consistent with Air Force's one team one force policy. Many Air Force leaders believed such concessions would result in confusing the public and that such distinctions would be meaningless without constant public reminder of why exceptions are made. The Department of the Air Force approved and authorized its first distinctive uniform for members of the Pararescue career field in 1966. The Air Force approved and authorizing for the combat control distinctive beret uniform in 1973 and began making other concessions of approving other distinctive beret uniforms for other career fields during the 1980s and subsequent decades.

Regardless of specialty (AFSC/MOS/NEC) or unit the approval of distinctive beret uniform for wear with service uniforms is not intended as self-recognition but as recognition directed towards a group fulfilling the accomplishment of unique duties associated with specific mission roles at an above average level of dependability and reliability. Generally speaking the beret provides recognition of all members of the group being volunteers to perform hazardous duties, completed specific standardized qualification training to provide a unique or extraordinary tactical capability, and willingly sustain strong level of personal and team/unit mission readiness to respond and accomplish quickly. Another perspective of wearing a distinctive beret uniform is it is expected such highly trained military members voluntarily bring with them into performing their duties a reasonable balance between pursuing one's own self interests and willingly being there doing military duties efficiently and effectively in an often dangerous operational environment.

Thus the distinctive beret uniform often with bloused combat boots worn with service uniform for other than ceremonial purposes (Honor Guard, Color Guard, Drill Team, Band) has public conveyance of a commendation of respect to a group having earned respect of successfully accomplishing in physically demanding and often perilous operational environments.

Distinctive Beret Uniform Chronological History

Prior to 1961 no military department of the United States had an authorized distinctive beret service uniform to distinguish members of the military services having unique military skills and qualifications who were also performing military duties demanding the highest mental and physical discipline.

1961: The Department of Army approved distinctive official head gear uniform of green beret for members of its Special Forces on 25 September 1961 (DA Message 578636). The first official wearing of the newly authorized Green Beret was at a Special Forces demonstration staged for President John F. Kennedy at Fort Bragg on 12 October 1961. President Kennedy was instrumental in the approval by DA of the Green Beret for US Special Forces. Currently, all Special Forces-qualified soldiers wear the Green Beret with the authorized flash of their Special Forces Group. The Special Forces Tab is awarded to any individual who has successfully completed the Special Forces Qualification Course or the Special Forces Officer Course. The SF Tab was approved by the Army's Chief of Staff on 17 June 1983, based on a request from the Commander of USAJFKSWC. Criteria, wear policy and authorization to wear the tab was announced in DA Message 061300Z, October 1983, Subject: Special Forces Tab. On 25 November 1984, the Army

Chief of Staff approved a metal replica of the embroidered tab for wear on the mess/dress uniforms.²

- 1966: The Air Force approved the distinctive uniform of maroon beret and USAF Pararescue flash and crest on 1 June 1966. The Chief of Staff on approval noted Pararescue personnel are highly trained specialists who perform extremely hazardous duties demanding of the very highest mental and physical discipline and thus deserve to wear the distinctive attire consisting of maroon beret, bloused trousers with combat boots, and special badge both on and off base. As USAF Pararescue MOS was established shortly before Army Air Forces converted to Department of the Air Force, members of the USAF Pararescue career field had previously been authorized wear of bloused boots and Airborne Cap Badge on Garrison (Army Air Forces)/Flight (Air Force) Cap with service dress, service and flight uniform.
- 1975: U.S. Army Rangers received authorization through AR 670-5, Uniform and Insignia, 30 January 1975, to wear black berets. Previously, locally authorized black berets had been worn briefly by the 10th Ranger Company (Airborne), 45th Infantry Division, during the Korean War before their movement to Korea; Company F (LRP), 52d Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, in 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam; Company H (Ranger), 75th Infantry, 1st Cavalry Division, in 1970 in the Republic of Vietnam; and Company N (Ranger), 75th Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, in 1971 in the Republic of Vietnam. The Army changed the Ranger's Black Beret to the Tan Beret on March 15, 2001. This change resulted from the announcement in 2000 that the Army would issue black berets to all soldiers effective on the Army's June 14, 2001 birthday. The Commandant of the U.S. Army Infantry School may award the Ranger Tab to any person who successfully completed a Ranger Course conducted by that school. The cloth tab was approved by HQDA on 6 November 1950. Authorization to wear the tab was included in Change 2, AR 600-70, dated 23 January 1953. On 25 November 1984, the Army Chief of Staff approved a metal replica of the embroidered tab for wear on the dress mess uniforms.³
- 1976: USAF CCT had adopted the Navy Blue Beret as a distinctive duty uniform during the SEA conflicts; however the Scarlet Beret was adopted in 1976 with the flash and crest being approved sometime in the 1980s.⁴ Source document not found documenting when the CCT beret became an approved AF distinctive uniform, but it happened at the time USAF Security Forces were authorized Navy Blue Beret as a duty uniform.
- 1976: Combat Weather (AFSC J-coded positions)--after 1976 but before 1998. Members of the specialty sustaining airborne parachutist qualifications adopted wear of Pewter Gray beret in early 1970s and a Blue beret was subsequently used until Gray was adopted again in 1986 at which time no distinctive flash was authorized. The Air Force approved the Combat Weather Team Airborne crest in 2004. Source document not found identifying when Combat Weather beret became an Air Force approved distinctive uniform. With the 2009 establishment of the 1W0X2 Special Operations Weather Career Field (AFSC) the grey beret distinctive uniform is worn by members of the Special Operations Career Field (AFSC authorized) and members of the 1W0X1 Weather Career Field (unit duty position authorized) while assigned to performing duties in J-coded in support of Army duty positions at Ft Campbell and Ft Bragg. The Combat Weather (1W0X1 AFSCs)

assigned to conventional army units are typically embedded in support units “collocate” with smaller direct ground combat battalions or in brigade level support positions, many- if not all-of the duty positions to include the j-coded positions are open to women. Not all members of SOW career field (AFSC) will go to HALO or SCUBA, the SOW career field approach to these schools is similar to Army Special Forces Teams (ODAs).

- 1979: TACP-The Black Beret was adopted for wear. TACP crest and Flash was proposed in 1983 and approved July 1985. Source document not found identifying when TACP's beret became an Air Force approved distinctive uniform.
- 1980: The 82nd Airborne first petitioned the Department of Army for approval of wear of the red (maroon) beret in 1955, they presented the argument that Special Forces was wearing Berets. It was not until 28 November 1980, that HQDA authorize airborne organizations to wear the maroon beret.
- 2004: USAF SERE - The 96th AF Uniform Board authorized Survival Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Specialist the wear of a Pewter Green Beret. SERE's operational role is to provide the support measures before an individual becomes isolated (Training) and after an individual becomes isolated (reintegration). SERE duties in this role focus on collecting perishable essential intelligence and survival, evasion, resistance, escape (SERE) information, while at the same time tending to the physical and psychological welfare of recovered isolated personnel. Their place of duty is generally within the Personnel Recovery cell (command and control) doing coordination. SERE duties and purpose is not being dedicated or augmenting tactical members of the recovery force or recovery teams.
- 2005: Security Forces – The 97th Uniform Board in 2005 approved-"wear of the security forces duty badge and beret is authorized while an individual is assigned a 3PXXX duty Air Force Specialty Code position and is also their primary AFSC, including PME attendance and staff tours above group level." Wear heraldry actually began in December 1956 as ceremonial organizational wear by members of the Strategic Air Command's Elite Guard (utilization being for HQ SAC facility security and ceremonial functions) and as a garrison and field uniform by members of many of SAC's Combat Defense Squadrons until these units were disbanded between 1966 and 1969. In September 1966 the 1041st Security Strike Force Test Squadron (Operation Safeside) commander authorized duty wear of the Navy Blue beret to set off members of his unit from other Air Force members. In 1976 Navy Blue beret was adopted as a duty uniform regardless of unit security/law enforcement members were assigned with justification reasoning being beret gives others means of readily identifying Security Forces members in a crisis situation, unique appearance has effect of providing deterrence to those who may seek to violate the law, damage and steal property, or harm others. It was also approved with purpose of establishing appearance standards of to improve moral and pride. For a period of time augmenters from other AFSCs were also allowed to wear while performing SF duties. The 2005 approval and authorization for wear with service uniforms on and off duty had purpose of identifying members of the Security Forces career field of being an elite group of Air Force personnel charged with primary purpose of protecting the Air Force on the

ground. Primary role and mission is operations support of defending installations, airfields, missile fields and aircraft on the ramp.⁵

Wear of the distinctive uniform beret does bring with it responsibility of knowing performance, behavior, and conduct while wearing it reflects on all others who wore the beret in the past, those currently wearing it, and those who wear it in the future. Consequently, there is attitude of confidence (self-direction, self-efficacy, self-mastery, self-control, and self-discipline) and, honor, and duty (willingness to endure obstacle and suffering in order to accomplish some military goal, objective or mission). The distinctive uniform beret should not be worn with attitude of arrogance, vanity, superiority.

No Beret, but a Special Warfare Insignia (otherwise more popularly known as the SEAL Trident)

1962: SEAL TEAMS— The **Special Warfare Insignia**, also known as the “SEAL Trident”, or its more popular nickname, "The Budweiser," was established sometime after 1962 as a "successor badge" to the obsolete Underwater Demolition Badge. It is one of the most recognizable combat badges of the United States Navy and perhaps of the United States Military. The Special Warfare insignia was initially issued in two grades, being a gold badge for officers and silver for enlisted. In the 1970s, the Silver SEAL badge was abolished and the Special Warfare Badge was issued thereafter in a single grade. The SEAL badge is therefore unique in the Navy in that it is one of the few badges issued in a single grade for both officers and enlisted personnel. This is partly due to the combined training that both officers and enlisted receive, side by side, when involved in BUD/S training. Its design of a golden eagle clutching a U.S. Navy anchor, trident, and pistol has distinctive uniqueness of **only** insignia in the United States government where the bald eagle is bowing his head. This bowing has purpose of bestowing honor to those willing and dedicated enough to persevere through the most difficult training in the world.

Special Warfare/Special Operations/Special Tactics Heraldry Influences

The special operations, special warfare, Special Forces heraldry influence is what transformed beret uniforms (US Army Special Forces -1961 and US Air Force Pararescue-1966) from an encouraging morale-enhancing distinction to a military heraldic symbol identifying military occupations or military units as a recognized operational capability exemplifying a human performance having attached commitment with conviction to a creed⁶, oath or code-of-conduct to be ready and willing to succeed in any mission - and live to succeed again. The willing-to-succeed-in-any and the live-to-succeed-again is a simple human performance capability statement concerning operational dependability, operational sustainability and operational usability. There is no necessity for the beret to be such an identification symbol, but it is the heraldry choice both the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force decided when approving and authorizing the first distinctive beret service uniforms for US Army Special Forces and US Air Force Pararescue.

The original distinctive beret uniform approval and authorization decision of both services had a collective solidarity of it's the more difficult to train, educate and develop operational human

performance capability being integrated into the physically and psychologically demanding operational environment influencing the authorizing and approval of new distinctive uniform head gear and badges. Consequently the beret heraldic symbol identifies both a needed human performance operational capability and a significant voluntary willingness to endure the hardships and be exposed to the higher risks in executing and accomplishing operations and missions more so than being a demarcation symbol between being a general purpose force or a unique specialized-force performing niche functions or roles and missions.

Although the operational environment encountered in conducting special operations type missions is such that human performance necessity is functional fitness must exist at sufficient level to ensure ability to act prevails when the situation is truly dangerous and physically demanding. It also brings with it subtleties of human performance that distorts some unique relationships of distinctive military uniform beret and insignias into a controversial matter.

The controversy results from the DOD Direct Combat and definition assignment rule that provides four allowable restrictions for assigning women to duty assignments or classifying them into a military occupation. These allowable reasons are: (1) where the Service Secretary attests that the costs of appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements are prohibitive; (2) where units are positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain in direct ground combat units that are closed to women; (3) where units are engaged in long range reconnaissance operations and Special Forces missions; and, (4) where job related physical requirements would necessarily exclude the vast majority of women Service members.

“Quality before Quantity” establishes lack of functional fitness essential to perform critical military occupation core skills in the operational environment is an unacceptable risk. How rigorous the screening, assessment and selection standards are is directly determined by the typical hardships and hazards encountered while participating and contributing to accomplishing the missions or conducting operations. The resulting reality is job related physical and mental fitness requirements necessarily also exclude a vast majority of Male service members as they progress through the screening and job qualification training process.⁷

However the historical background being disclosed is when a capability came into being to fulfill a mission role need. Current distinctive beret uniforms, distinctive unit insignias/badges (Navy Special Warfare insignia) are new post WWII and began with the strengthening of specialized capabilities to participate in conducting unconventional and irregular warfare an expedient history of when such capability was initially developed, trained and organized is beneficial to understanding distinctive uniform heraldry being connected to unique and highly trained unit and team tactical capability.

Most, if not all, military units, teams, and jobs considered to be special operations forces have heritage connected to combat guerrilla warfare or behind enemy lines long range reconnaissance operations conducted during WWII. Some of these unit and team tactical capabilities have existed continuously from the 1940s and others came into being during the 1950s, 1960s and subsequent decades.

Deliberate effort was initiated in all military departments by 1962 to develop and strengthen specialized capabilities to participate in conducting unconventional warfare. Emphasis was put

on ensuring the military responders providing such tactical capability are qualified, capable and ready to respond. Eventually members of these units earned a dependability, reliability and mission successfully accomplished reputation to cumulate earning uniform distinctions indicating members of these units are all volunteers having self-discipline and are uniquely highly trained and qualified to execute and accomplish operations in extraordinary physically demand and perilous operational environments. This level of willingness, skill qualifications and readiness cannot be created the moment a crisis or incident happens and it is both difficult and expensive to mass produce. Consequently distinctive uniform heraldry worn by such service members performing such duties become visible symbols the service member is a member of a team or unit obtaining and sustaining unique skill capabilities and having willingness to be there contributing that is apart from average or typical.

This has awkward results of blurring a demarcation of military operations being conventional or special operations of can't be a uniquely trained tactical capability if you are not special operations performing special operations roles and missions. Units such as the US Army 82nd Airborne with distinctive maroon beret give certain-so evidence such distinctive uniform heraldry devices is result of springing from self-discipline and essence of respect for self, for service, for country and not from being a designated special operations forces asset or capability.

Special operations is nothing more than a purposefully means to respond to a low intensity threat using a small specialized military capability. A special operations capability is the military means to respond that lowers the risk of active military involvement at levels that are both politically unacceptable and tactically inappropriate. The determinant distinction between special operations and conventional operations is conventional is the pitting of army against army to seize, control and occupy territory by defeating a hi-threat conventional army or by being the primary peace keeping force in a region.

A special operations or mission response depends on reliable small team capability of ready and willing human performance that contributes to some outcome while facing difficulty and danger. Screening, assessment, and selection standards have goals of maximizing survivability of both the participating individual and small tactical team performing critical occupational skills in perilous operational environments. The training and qualification requirements are capabilities based and typical operational environment impelled. This result in broad implications to the level of human performance needed to insure students have the functional fitness the critical occupational core skill performance requires in the typical operational environment before considerable time and money is committed to train and qualify to perform such military occupational duties. Additional significant payoff for both the student and the military department is such screening serves to minimize the risk of student injury and enhances student learning of critical core occupational skills and knowledge performance.

Accession and training programs relying heavily on screening and selection methods that access physical, mental and emotional fitness began being implemented after WWII in an effort to both improve training performance, predict training performance and assess personality being adaptable to the typical operational environment. Prescreening usually includes go/no-go completion of a Physical Ability and Stamina Test or Physical Screening Test, Emotional Quotient Indicator Test (EQI) or Computerized-Special Operations Resilience Test (C-SORT) and a selection/screening course of some sort to enter into required advanced and specialized

training courses. These structured selection processes are strongly established by the level of human performance needed in the typical operational environment duties are expected to be accomplished in. The following is the history the organizational change or establishment of new tactical operational capability after WWII directly connected to participating in operations strongly reliant on members of military occupations providing the best, most thorough, dependable and reliable human performance solution possible.

The following chronology captures the transformational organizational structural change and occupational change implemented to solve an operational capability gap existing in current and anticipated threat/operational environments. The timeline is limited to development resulting in being continuously operationally available after WWII.

1947: The USAF activated its first Pararescue Teams 1 July 1947⁸ and the first USAF Pararescue teams were ready for field assignment in November 1947. However US Army Air Forces conducts parachute rescue activities beginning in 1940 and several rescue-by-parachute missions were accomplished in the China Burma India Theater of combat operations during WWII. Although Special Operations Trauma Specialist (MOS 91W) assigned to the Ranger Companies, Special Forces Medical NCO (MOS 18D) assigned to the Special Forces A and B Detachments, the U.S. Navy SEAL Independent Duty Corpsman assigned to the SEAL Teams, and USAF Pararescue have similar level of medical qualifications and capability there are operations necessities of personnel recovery and National SAR and International SAR that results in those performing USAF Pararescue duties regardless of unit of assignment and duty position being an adept rescue and SERE specialist. Pararescuemen are the only DOD specialty specifically trained and equipped to conduct conventional and unconventional recovery operations.

1952: U.S. Army Special Forces grew out of the establishment of the Special Operations Division of the Psychological Warfare Center activated at Fort Bragg, NC in May 1952. Its first unit—10th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, North Carolina--activated 10 June 1952⁹. The first class of the Special Forces Course graduated in 1952 and after completing the intensive individual and team training the additional skill identifier of 'S'-Special Forces qualified was added to the 'Branch Feeder' MOS (05BXS, 11BXS, 11CXS, 12BXS, 91BXS, 11FXS, 11FXS; the X is a skill level variable). Special Forces Soldiers first saw combat in 1953 as individuals deployed from 10th SFG to Korea.¹⁰ A major expansion of Special Forces occurred during the 1960s, with a total of eighteen groups organized in the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard.¹¹ Renewed emphasis on special operations in the 1980s led to the Army establishing on October 1, 1984, a separate enlisted and office career field for Special Forces. The warrant officer career field soon followed and, the Special Forces Branch was established as a basic branch of the Army effective April 9, 1987, by General Orders No. 35, June 19, 1987.¹² The CMF 18 is subdivided into five accession Military Occupational Specialties (MOS's): 18A, Detachment Commander; 18B, SF Weapons Sergeant; 18C, SF Engineer Sergeant; 18D, SF Medical Sergeant; and 18E, SF Communications Sergeant. 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.¹³

- 1953: The first USAF Combat Control Teams activated 15 January 1953 at Donaldson AFB South Carolina.¹⁴ The teams were incorporated into aerial port squadrons to support tactical airlift operations and remained there until 1977, when restructuring and mission realignment began allowing a system of CCT squadrons and detachments. In 1979 role and mission of CCT began a transformation and expansion from establishing usable navigation aids and providing initial air traffic control for tactical airlift and airborne operations into being a Special Tactics capability for air assaults and forward air controllers for gunships and CAS.¹⁵ Since their activation, combat controllers have made many contributions to Air Force operations worldwide. Combat controllers participated and distinguished themselves in the Lebanon crisis (Jul- Oct '58), the Congo crisis (Jul-Oct '60), the Cuban crisis (Sep '62), the China-India confrontation (Nov '62 - Sep '63), the Dominican Republic contingency, and the Southeast Asia conflict (including the evacuation of Vietnam and Cambodia).
- 1955: Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance (Force Recon or FORECON). Although the beginning of present day Marine Reconnaissance is traceable to units participating in many landing and other fighting operations of WWII, Force Reconnaissance has its beginnings happening on 1 July 1955 with the activation Marine Corps Test Unit #1 near Basilone Road at Camp Horno on MCB Camp Pendleton. In July 1957 Marine Corps Test Unit #1 merged with 1st Amphibious Reconnaissance Company to form on 19 June 1957 the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. It consisted of an amphibious recon platoon, deep recon platoon, and a pathfinder platoon. This was the beginning of new found operational capability extending reconnaissance Marine capabilities of operating further behind enemy lines; however functionally the primary mission of the force reconnaissance company focused on conducting pre-assault and distant post-assault reconnaissance in support of a landing force.¹⁶ The reconnaissance MOS structure is 0321 Reconnaissance Man, 0323 - Reconnaissance Man, Parachutist Qualified, 0324 - Reconnaissance Man, Combatant Diver Qualified, and 0326 - Reconnaissance Man, Parachutist and Combatant Diver Qualified. The Force Reconnaissance companies require assigned reconnaissance MOS members to have parachutist qualifications. Although the Force Recon companies, detachments and platoons performed deep reconnaissance and direct action (DA) operations, a cohesive approach was lacking and the capability was piecemeal.¹⁷ A significant Marine Corps doctrinal approach to special operations change happened in 2006. The activation of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command on February 24, 2006 and subsequent October 26, 2006 activation the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion resulted in the drawing in ranks of the highest trained Force Recon Marines to form Marine Special Operations Companies. The resulting significance is the Direct Action missions are now primarily conducted by the new Marine Special Operations Teams (MSOT) with Force Reconnaissance focusing on intelligence gathering supporting expeditionary and amphibious operations.¹⁸ MARSOC establishes a new primary 0372-Marine Critical Skills Operators (CSO) MOS effective October 1, 2011. Stating special forces team is typically comprised of the very best personnel and equipment the military has to offer the value of PMOS 0372-Marine Critical Skills Operators (CSO)- is it facilitates management of SOF skills, standardizes training, retention, promotions, incentives, accountability and career progression.¹⁹ The MOS is open to Marines holding Sergeant through Master Gunnery Sergeant. Corporals, but not Lance Corporals, may apply if eligible for promotion.

- 1962: The first U.S Navy Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) Teams were activated January 1962 as a major transformation of the WWII Underwater Demolition Teams from amphibious support tasks into new roles and missions of conducting unconventional warfare using covert and clandestine methods and tactics in maritime and inland waterway environments. SEAL operational capabilities and tasking has continued to expand since 1962 to include special operations, unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense hundreds of miles from any ocean or inland waterway. The Department of the Navy establishes the Special Operations Operator rating on 8 May 2006. Before this rate volunteers applied to become a SEAL after joining the Navy and being trained in another rate.²⁰
- 1963: USAF Special Operations Combat Weather Teams (SOWT) were “established January 1963”²¹, but the Air Force didn’t establish an Air Force specialty code for SOWT until 3 October 2008.²² There was minimal standardized advanced training requirements and career retention progression in special operations weather force structure prior to the period between 1988 and 1993. SOWTs rarely, if ever, are assigned to conventional Army units. All SOWT members serve in units aligned under AFSOC and hold (since 2009) award of 1W0X2 Special Operations Weather Career Field (AFSC)
- 1969: Although US Army units specifically designated as Rangers and using Ranger tactics were employed on the American frontier as early as 1670 there has been no continuous RANGER unit history until after 1969.²³ The US Army disbanded its Ranger units at the end of WW II and again after the Korean War. Although the US Army reformed Ranger unit during 1969 in Vietnam as the 75th Infantry Regiment, the current Ranger Battalions were not actually formed until 1974. This coincides with the 1975 Department of the Army authorization to wear a distinctive beret uniform. The intent of the date used is indicating when current combat capabilities were formed and sustained without being disbanded. It should be noted the Department of the Army as of February 9, 2005 no longer requires Army members to be assigned against a Ranger authorization as a prerequisite to attend the Ranger school. Opening attendance to the Ranger School within the combat arms exclusion policy has purpose and goal of increasing Ranger qualified soldiers throughout the Army.²⁴
- 1977: Tactical Air Control Party Team (TACP) was established as an enlisted specialty 30 April 1977²⁵. TACP is assigned to both conventional direct ground combat Army units and special operations units. The advanced skills training and qualifications of the TACP member is determined by the design capability of the Army maneuver battalion they are assigned to and the corps, division, brigade and battalion levels their position exists to support. Those TACP members providing Joint Terminal Attack controllers (JTACS) to special operations forces and the SOF mission serve in units aligned under AFSOC.²⁶

DEPARTMENTS OF ARMY and AIR FORCE HERALDTY AMBIGUITY

The differing nature of capability put on and over the battlefield results in significant differences in the tactical unit capability force structure organization provided to combatant commanders by these two military services. Much uniform heraldry influences affecting differences between the Army and Air force results from how tactical and operational manpower capability is organized to be available and utilized.

In simplistic comparison the Army has numerous branches (Infantry Artillery, Aviation, Armor, logistics, Medical Corps, Civil Affairs Corps, Special Forces, and etc.) and the Air Force has only one branch, aviation. The being one branch influences the Air Force's combat forward battlefield tactical surface capability being concentrated to particular career fields providing unique autonomous small-scale surface tactical capability rather than large tactical units composed of many career fields with accompanying combat support elements maneuvering and conducting combat, long range reconnaissance or other military operations within the forward on the surface active combat zone.

Consequently the Department of the Army is unenthusiastic on heraldry distinguishing specific military occupations (MOSs/AFSCs/NECs). The Air Force however as a result of most of its military classifications being highly technical and with most of Air Force occupations manpower populating units that do not engage the enemy or fight is somewhat more supportive on approving heraldry that distinguishes specific military occupations.

Army heraldry also has long traditional history authorizing those soldiers who are combat veterans permanent wear of the Shoulder Service Insignia of the unit they fought with on their right shoulder or new heraldry recognition of Combat Service Identification Badge (CSIB) device worn on right pocket of the Army Service uniform. The Air Force in establishing its Service Uniform decided this was an unneeded heraldry as the Air Forces combat units are concentrated in units flying aircraft having a crew and flown by rated commissioned officers.

The Air Force's ground battlefield strength capability is an exception where the combat capability is concentrated in small in member number occupations (AFSCs/MOSs/NECs). Members of these occupations rather than units are exclusively utilized to fulfill mission role needs of specific mission area requirements other than installation, base defense and aircraft sortie generation (not utilized to perform Service support, Installation Support, Combat Support duties). Collectively the AFSCs providing the Air Forces surface combatant capability are classified as being the Battlefield Airman AFSCs.²⁷

The following specific Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) are designated Battlefield Airman Career fields: Combat Rescue Officers (CRO, 13DXA), Special Tactics Officers (STO, 13DXB), Pararescue Airmen (PJ, 1T2X1), Combat Control Airmen (CCT, 1C2X1), Tactical Air Control Personnel (TACP/ASOC, 1C4X1), Special Operations Weather Team (SOWT) Airmen (1W0X1)/Officers (15WX) and Battlefield Weather Airmen (1W0X1)/Officers (15WX). The Battlefield Airmen Mission Areas are: Joint Fires Integration, Tactical Airlift Operations, Special Operations, Weather Support Operations, and Personnel Recovery/Recovery Operations.

Two AFSCs not designated being Battlefield Airman Career fields also having approved and authorized distinctive beret uniforms are the Security Forces and SERE AFSCs.

Air Force's Security Forces career field primary capability purpose is installation support, intercontinental nuclear missile field security, airfield defense, and sortie generating security purpose. There is minimal forward battlefield removed from an established airfield and its perimeter defense purpose. Although the career field provides a significant tactical capability, the career field lacks mandatory all members of the career field must obtain and sustain combat mission ready qualification mandates which diverges from the all members of the career field

equally highly trained qualified and are equally ready to be employed into physically demanding and perilous operational environments.

The Air Force's SERE career field has strongest concentration of duty positions having day-to-day purpose of training other Air Force service members. A lower percentile of duty positions have purpose of testing and evaluating survival and egress equipment and another percentage of duty positions is dedicated mission support within the Personnel Recovery cell (command and control) doing mission coordination and after mission interviews. Although highly trained and qualified the SERE duty position utilization is absent of being employed into physically demanding and perilous operational environments to execute and accomplish the tactical mission.

The distinctive Beret uniforms are military heraldic symbols having intention of accountability more so than obtaining admiration from others. The accountability is not to commanders or officers appointed above the service member in the chain-of-command but to the performance contribution of those having the resilient perseverance that others took notice of as being beyond average or common place.

It is the sustaining above average mission readiness of being available and reliably capable of doing that causes being respected by others and not the individual's belief wear of the beret is deserved. It is the voluntary action of many to overcome difficulties rather than participating in spiritless pandering to bolstering retention and career progression that influenced those holding command positions to approve the distinctive beret uniform. It is substance of dependable and reliable performance with willingness to accept responsibility more so than special/unique skills, abilities and building self-image. The substance embraces the collective recurring contribution of all members of the group over a period of years which earns any exalted or revered admiration connected to the distinctive headgear, badge or other heraldry device. The substance involves the overall past and present members of the group being successful in executing extraordinary tactical operations in a manner that springs from self-discipline not born from necessity and fear that is also accompanied with essence of respect for self, for service, for country. There must be this spirit of keeping faith with the reputation earned by the band of brothers who accomplished feats that good men tell their sons as examples of what honor, courage, bravery, perseverance and other virtues are. Without this spirit of keeping faith the distinctive uniform headgear is nothing but a hat and the distinctive badge nothing more than inexpensive common metal. The beret should not be worn in arrogance as arrogant persons harm themselves as the arrogant often fail in their performance to provide above average mission reliability, dependability and survivability.

¹ ASU ALARACT Message 202-2008, SUBJECT: ARMY SERVICE UNIFORM (ASU) WEAR POLICY, http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/UniformedServices/ALARACT_2008.aspx, (accessed 14 October 2011).

² Army Quartermaster Museum - Fort Lee, Virginia: US Army Special Forces Tab, http://www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil/airborne/sf_tab.htm, (accessed 11 October 2011).

³ Army Quartermaster Museum - Fort Lee, Virginia: US Army Ranger Tab, http://www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil/airborne/ranger_tab.htm, (accessed 11 October 2011).

⁴ CCT @ The Eye of the Storm, Chapter 3, <http://www.ccsfhf.org/book/Chapter3.pdf>, (accessed 14 October 2011). “For years, Combat Controllers boot legged uniform traditions that were common to U.S. Army Special Forces, Airborne Divisions and even Air Force Pararescue (PJs). In those days, combat controllers wearing a beret and blousing Class A uniforms had a Unit Commander’s CCT Special Uniform letter in his wallet. The letter described the special uniform and was the authority document presented to anxious Air Policemen and Second Lieutenants who questioned the nonstandard USAF uniform. ... Using the already approved Pararescue (PJ) model, Adcock wrote a new CCT Section for MAC Supplement 1, to the USAF Uniform Manual (AFM 35-10). When published, the new MAC Supplement clearly stated and defined the wear of the beret and bloused boots with all uniforms and adopted a beret emblem that was adapted from an old, Vietnam-era CCT emblem.”

⁵ Air Force Manual 31-201, Volume 1, Security Force History and Organization (Draft) 1 May 2003; History of SAC Elite Guard (December 1956-Present), 3906 Special Security Squadron (SAC), Offutt AFB Nebraska; After Dinner Speech Given by Lt Colonel William Wise Sir., USAF on the occasion of the deactivation of the 82nd CSP Wing (TAC) Ft Campbell Kentucky; Safe Side Final Report 1 September 1966 - 11 August 1967, Directorate of Security Police AF SP, Headquarters United States Air Force Washington DC, 1 October 1967.

⁶ A warrior ethos creed or oath is a code of conduct and inspirational daily reminder of the “reason why training and readiness standards exist not only for the members of military units and occupations, but to also weave together a general explanation understanding of duty, honor, and a sense of why to people of all walks of life. It doesn’t need to be written, but it does need some grounding in the most, if not all, members of the group exemplifying a living attachment to a creed, oath or code-of-conduct that comes to serve through performance and accomplishment to inspire others. The effective and efficient creed is one where there is no erosion over time of the group exemplifying a living commitment and conviction to the creed, oath or code of conduct. The Special Forces Creed, The Ranger Creed, The Pararescue Creed and the six articles of the “Code of Conduct for Members of the United States Armed Forces” are example of written creeds, but it is the honorable and/or good acts and deeds done the creed is a reminder of that inspires and earns respect.

⁷ Studies have consistently put forth data since WWI that 50% or more of male draftees and volunteers enlisting in the military services lack the physical fitness suitable to function adequately as combatants on the battlefield. Studies including but not limited to: Rice, E.A. and others, A Brief History of Physical Education. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958. Williams, Jesse F., The Principles of Physical Education. Philadelphia: Saunders and Company, 1948. Balke, Bruno, and Ray W Ware, Captain, USAF. The Present Status of Physical Fitness in the Air Force. Unpublished research report No. 59-67. School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph AFB TX, May 1959 (AD 036235), <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a036235.pdf>. Beal, Scott A. The Roles of Perseverance, Cognitive Ability, and Physical Fitness in U.S. Army Special Forces Assessment and Selection, Army Project Number 633007A792, U.S. Army Research Institute, July 2010. Swiderski, Steven J. Fit-To-Fight: waist vs. waist/height measurements to determine an individual’s fitness level – a study in statistical regression and analysis, Air University-Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, June 2005. Assessing Fitness for Military Enlistment: Physical, Medical, and Mental Health Standards, Committee on Youth Population and Military Recruitment: Physical, Medical, and Mental Health Standards, National Research Council, 2006. Slojkowski, Michael, Lt Col, USAF, Improving Fitness Standards and Evaluation Methodologies for Combat Rescue Officers and Pararescuemen, Air War College Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, February 2009.

⁸ Historical Report: Air Rescue Service, 1 January 1947 to 30 June 1947, pp. 30-34, 42. Historical Report: Air Rescue Service, 1 July 1947 to 31 December 1947. pp. 14-16, 20-28.

⁹ U.S. Army Special Forces History and Origins, Special Operations.com, http://www.specialoperations.com/Army/Special_Forces/SF_Info/Detailed_History.htm#early, (accessed 20 September 2007).

¹⁰ <http://www.bragg.army.mil/specialforces/History.htm> (accessed 21 January 2009).

¹¹ <http://www.bragg.army.mil/specialforces/History.htm> (accessed 21 January 2009).

¹² <http://www.bragg.army.mil/specialforces/History.htm> (accessed 21 January 2009).

¹³ <http://www.bragg.army.mil/specialforces/History.htm> (accessed 21 January 2009). 1st Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/001sfgp1sf.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011) - Activated 9 July 1942 at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, disbanded 6 January 1945 in France, reconstituted 15 April 1960 in the Regular Army... 3d Special Forces Group 1st Special Forces Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/003sfgp1sf.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011) - Activated 9 July 1942 at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, disbanded 6 January 1945 in France, reconstituted 15 April 1960 in the Regular Army... 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment Lineage, Activated 9 July 1942 at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, disbanded 6 January 1945 in France, reconstituted 15 April 1960 in the Regular Army... 10th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/010sfgp1sf.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011) - Activated 9 July 1942 at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, disbanded 6 January 1945 in France, reconstituted 15 April 1960 in the Regular Army... 19th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/019sfgp1sf.htm> (accessed 1 October 2011) - Activated 9 July 1942 at Fort William Henry Harrison, Montana, disbanded 6 January 1945 in France, reconstituted 15 April 1960 in the Regular Army... 39th Special Forces Detachment, 1st Special Forces Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/sf/039sfdet1sf.htm> (accessed 1 October 2011) - Constituted 27 August 1965 in the Regular Army as the 39th Special Forces Detachment, 1st Special Forces ...

¹⁴ U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet, Combat Controller, July 2006, http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=174&page=1 (accessed 20 September 2007). A History of Combat Control through the Years, CCT/online, 21 September 2007, <http://www.usafcc.com/history.htm>, (accessed 20 September 2007). Air Force Combat Controllers, CombatControlTeamsweblog.wordpress.com., 22 September 2007, <http://combatcontrolteam.wordpress.com/>, (accessed 22 September 2007).

¹⁵ Colonel John T. Carney Jr. and Benjamin F. Schemmer, No Room for Error, The Covert Operations of America's Special Tactics Units from Iran to Afghanistan, Ballantine Books, 2002.

¹⁶ FMFM 2-2 Amphibious Reconnaissance, USMC, 2 May 1969. Reference section 2-relationship among reconnaissance units.

¹⁷ DET ONE U.S. MARINE CORPS U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND DETACHMENT, 2003-2006, Lieutenant Colonel John P. Piedmont, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve; History Division, United States Marine Corps Washington, D.C. 2010 and Strong Men Armed-The Marine Corps-1st Force Reconnaissance Company, Patrick A. Rogers <http://www.forcerecon.com/strongmenarmed.htm> (accessed 10 December 2011)

¹⁸ Pushies, Fred J (2003). "Chapter 1: History". Marine Force Recon. Zenith Imprint. pp. 18–19. ISBN 9780760310113

¹⁹ R291313Z MAR 11 MSGID/GENADMIN/CMC WASHINGTON DC MRA MP//, INITIAL LAT MOVE OPPRTUNITY FOR MARSOC CRITICAL SKILLS OPERATOR AND PRIMARY MOS 0372 ESTABLISHMENT GUIDANCE

²⁰ R082340Z MAY 06 CNO WASHINGTON DC//N1NT//, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR (SO) RATING

²¹ The Origins of Air Force Weather's Army Support, Air Force Weather Historian, winter 2004, Volume 2, Issue 1. Colonel Golding recalls Special Operations Weather, Air Force Weather Historian, winter 2004, Volume 2, Issue 1.

²² Special Operations Weathermen get new Air Force Specialty Code, Air Force Print News Today, 3 October 2008.

²³ 75th Ranger Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011) - Organized 3 October 1943 in the Army of the United States in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations as the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), Inactivated 1 July 1945 in China ... Reorganized 1 July 1984 with Headquarters at Fort Benning, Georgia ... see also 1st Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra001bn.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011); 2d Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment Lineage, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra002bn.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011); 3d Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment Lineage <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra003bn.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011); and Special Troops Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment Lineage <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0075ra-sptpsbn.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011).

²⁴ R091738Z Feb 05 PSN 667894K40, DA Washington DC, Selection and Scheduling of Soldiers For United States Army Ranger School

²⁵ Tactical Air Control Party-Death on Call, Globalsecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/usaf/tacp.htm> (accessed 20 September 2007). ROMAD History, roma.com, <http://www.romad.com/history/history.htm>, (accessed 20 September 2007)

²⁶ 17th ASOS Transitions from ACC to AFSOC, AFSOC Public Affairs, 5 October 2008

²⁷ AIR FORCE POLICY DIRECTIVE 10-35 BATTLEFIELD AIRMEN, 4 FEBRUARY 2005 (Certified current 23 March 2009)