

EAGLE™

JUNE
1984
\$3.00

© 02687

FOR THE AMERICAN FIGHTING MAN

THE NEW FACE OF TERROR

Russia Exports Mid-East Terrorists to America!

**KHOMEINI'S
HENCHMEN
TAKE AIM!**

**Bullets, Bombs
And Murder
On Our Streets!**

**USAF
Combat
Controllers
Drop Into Hell**

**Kill-Crazy in
EL SALVADOR**

UH60A BLACK HAWK!
Legend in the Making

AFGHANISTAN:
Russia's Killing Ground

**ROYAL MARINE
CAMMANDOES**
Britain's Elite Death-Dealers

U.S. BEATS WORLD! *Ft. Benning Supersoldier Shootout*

Newbies on Patrol: Confusion in the Kill Zone!

GUN TESTS: Ultimax 100 SAW Silenced .50 HMG



IN THE MIDST

When the Combat Control team is surrounded, cut off, and in terrible danger of instant annihilation—that's normal.

By Lee Brighton

The US Air Force Combat Control Teams (CCT for short) are a small group of specially trained, highly mobile air traffic controllers who are used during war and more recently in peace. They have been involved in everything from conflict in Viet Nam to humanitarian missions that the US sent to Nicaragua and Guatemala after the earthquake struck there some years ago.

They maintain a low profile and are not heard of much. But, if you were ever on jump status with any of the military services, chances are you noticed them on the drop zone or worked directly with them on a special operation.

Compared to other elite units their ranks are relatively small. There are only about 300 Combat Controllers in the Air Force with close to 30 of those being officers. Both officers and enlisted men (the field is open only to males) undergo the same training, which starts off with Air Traffic Control School at Keesler AFB, Mississippi. Once an individual is certified as an air traffic controller (ATC) he then goes to Fort Benning for the Army's Airborne course to qualify as a paratrooper. The last phase is at Pope AFB, North Carolina, where the Combat Control School conducts a rigorous 8-1/2 week course. This is where the students use everything that they've learned at ATC and jump school to qualify as Combat Controllers and earn their red beret.

The school covers various subjects such as land navigation; setting up landing and drop zones; radio communications; jumpmaster procedures and of course physical training (PT). In addition to daily PT there is a 10 mile run which must be done within 90 minutes in order to graduate. Two weeks of the course are held at Camp Mackall where Special Forces also

conducts its field training. Here the students are trained in patrolling, ambushes, and immediate action drills. Demolitions and the use of the GAU-5 (CAR-15) are also covered.

After graduation from the course, the student reports to one of the Combat Control Teams worldwide where his training continues. Depending on the team's mission, an individual can attend SCUBA, HALO, or the new HAHO (high altitude, high opening) school. Even with these schools, training exercises, and actual missions it take about 2 years to produce a fully capable Combat Controller.

Each team consists of 24 personnel with 2 of those being officers. Every CCT has the same basic mission: to provide air traffic control; command and communication link; and to neutralize ordnance which may effect safe air traffic flow in the airhead. More specifically the primary duty is that of air traffic control in an austere or hostile environment. An example would be setting up a drop zone in enemy territory in order to support an airborne assault. The second mission of



Rappel-master gives commands to CCT student during helicopter insertion training.

command and communication link could be something like establishing a radio relay on a mountaintop or anywhere that a conventional radio squadron could not. The third mission of neutralizing ordnance is a situational requirement depending on the condition of an assault zone. If there is wreckage or some type of ordnance that would prevent aircraft from landing, CCT has the job of clearing it. An EOD team does not have the capability to HALO into a secluded landing zone to clear the area.

Tough Training

It must also be mentioned what CCT does not do. In spite of the cammouflage, tough training, and parachuting they are not in the business of engaging in combat with the enemy. If all goes well they will never fire a shot in anger. The training they receive in patrolling and ambushes is strictly for self-defense situations. The capture or discovery of a CCT could compromise a larger assault operation.

CCTs can be deployed in a variety of methods. Simple airlift into an area allows for unit integrity and large amounts of equipment can be transported. Helicopters are also excellent for these reasons but can insert personnel into more restrictive terrain by landing or rappelling. Static line parachute infiltration is standard for all teams however some have a HALO capability. Jumping in, despite its exotic image is really a disadvantage when a factor such as weight is looked at. Each man carries approximately 80 pounds, not including radios and extra batteries. The extra batteries or "lack of" can really help or hinder an extended operation.

Amphibious insertion can also be employed if the situation is right. Swimming, rubber boats, and SCUBA are all methods that are utilized. Like HALO, certain CCTs are all SCUBA qualified in order to maintain this capability.

Walking in is a simple but slow means of getting there. It is not as easily detectable as other methods, however, because there are no aircraft involved.

A prospective student looks at CCT and often sees only the HALO, SCUBA, and other exotic training. For the combat controller, these are merely different ways of going to work. Their main purpose in life is the control of aircraft.

CCT can trace its origins back to WWII airborne operations. After the 505th Airborne suffered heavy loses in Italy, the unit commander along with the airlift commander perceived a need for some sort of welcoming party on the ground before

OF THE ENEMY

Photo by U.S. Air Force



Combat Controllers being inserted into the jungle from a UH-1H helicopter.

Combat Control students training in patrolling at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.



Photo by Sally Pender

COMBAT CONTROL: INFILTRATION AND EQUIPMENT

By LeRoy Thompson

Among elite military units within the U.S. armed forces, one of the least well known is the Air Force's Combat Controllers (not to be confused with the para-accountants of the 82nd



Abn's Combat Comptrollers). Like the Recons and SEALs, the Combat Controllers are trained to silently infiltrate behind enemy lines and to call in air strikes against enemy personnel, equipment, or installations. The Army's LRRPs, Rangers, and Special forces are also trained to infiltrate and call in air or artillery strikes, but the Combat Controllers are the Air Force's own integral ground forward controllers.

The Combat Controllers saw their share of action in Vietnam, but much of it was unheralded. Combat Controllers were often inserted along

the Ho Chi Minh Trail where they called in strikes on enemy truck convoys. Much of the credit for these strikes went to the Igloo White computer/sensor system, which does deserve a lot of credit. Still, a lot of those strikes were called in by CC's hidden along the trail network. Even though they didn't make the headlines—and they were glad they didn't since it kept the enemy guessing about whether they were there or not—CC teams were constantly being infiltrated or exfiltrated via chopper along the Trail, normally one team going in as another one came out.

Combat Controllers also operated in North Vietnam, surveying possible targets or calling in strikes. Even after most U.S. troops were withdrawn, Combat Controllers saw action in Vietnam, many being hastily sent back "in country" during the 1972 North Vietnamese invasion.

Combat Controllers operated in Vietnam, surveying possible targets and calling in air strikes.

Since the Vietnam War, Combat Controllers have continued to receive extensive and realistic training to prepare them for action anywhere in the world. Not only that, but rumors persist that the terrain of Cuba, North Korea, Iran, China, and even the Soviet Union wouldn't be unfamiliar to some Combat Controllers who've giv-

en many possible targets in these countries close—very close—scrutiny. Of course, everyone knows how military rumors are.

Once he can get to his operational area and survive there, the Combat Controller has to be able to perform his mission. The final phase of his training prepares him to do this. The

Rumors persist that the terrain of Cuba, North Korea, Iran, China and even the Soviet Union wouldn't be unfamiliar to some Combat Controllers.

Combat Controller has to learn to use a wide gamut of communications equipment. He has to know the rudiments of weather forecasting as it applies to air ops, and he also needs to know quite a bit about mapping and surveying techniques. Add to this a sound knowledge of the weapons delivery capabilities of the varied types of aircraft in the Air Force arsenal, and some idea can be gained of the technical knowledge required of the Combat Controller. CC's have to know their stuff, since they often call in air strikes virtually on top of themselves. Combat Controllers put their skills to especially good use working with "Spectre" gunship crews along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and they still train with the 919th Special Ops Squadron flying "Spectres" out of Eglin AFB, Florida. •

the main body arrived. This created the Army Pathfinder teams which were used throughout the war and are still in use today. When the Air Force was formed this same concept was carried over. Combat Controllers owe their heritage to these Pathfinders, much the same way as pilots do the Army Air Corps. The Army still utilizes pathfinder units today, however they could not, for instance, land a C-130. Except for SEAL teams and Special Forces missions, a Combat Control Team must guide any USAF aircraft that are used in airborne operations.

The title of Combat Controller would lead one to believe they are employed only in time of war. Not so. CCT is an active arm of US foreign policy during peacetime. Teams have been deployed to Lebanon, Congo, the Cuban crisis, Dominican Republic, and Jonestown Guyana. In Jonestown they lived up to their motto of "First There" since they were the first US assis-

tance to arrive on the scene. The first reports by radio were from a Combat Controller in an aircraft who upon seeing the massacre scene thought it was laundry scattered everywhere.

Air Traffic Control is a fairly safe administrative job, except when it's done in the midst of the enemy.

CCT was also on the ground in Zaire giving guidance to USAF C-141 Starlifters that dropped French Foreign Legion paratroopers in to liberate Belgian civilians. They also participated in the hostage res-

cue attempt in Iran.

One can only speculate as to their involvement with the Army's counter-terrorist Delta Force. There was heavy involvement in the Viet Nam conflict by the two teams stationed there and by the one in Thailand.

Today there are eight teams in the continental US and one each in Alaska, Panama, West Germany, and the Philippines. There are also two special operations teams in support of the SPECTRE gunships at Eglin AFB and in Europe.

Competition to fill the relatively few slots is tough, as is the training. Being a Combat Controller means a lot of extended travel and time out in the field. There's always the physical danger inherent with any unit that calls itself elite. But then there's the chance to participate in worldwide missions and adventure that most units, much less the average man, only dream about. •