



Special Operations Forces FM 3-18

United States Army Special Operations Command

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There has always been a romantic fascination with special operations forces (SOF). The idea of secret commandos or Rangers striking from the shadows surprising the enemy with overwhelming speed, violence of action, and cutting-edge technology appeals to America's image of highly trained, elite Soldiers. There is, however, another Soldier who fights from the shadows. This one is perhaps less known and far less understood. His real weapons are a deep understanding of terrain, the relationships built, and the influence developed to motivate and train others to take up the fight. These Soldiers are the U.S. Army SF, the "quiet professionals" whom history and popular culture often overlook. Designed to organize, train, and support indigenous personnel in behind-the-lines resistance activities, SF belongs to an organization unique in the Army's history. Founded at the Psychological Warfare Center at Fort Bragg in 1952 and based upon lessons learned and formation used in guerrilla warfare during World War II, its sole purpose was UW. The experience in Vietnam gave SF a second purpose: countering a subversive insurgency. This brief history identifies the precursors and major developments that created modern U.S. Army SF.

FM 3-18 is the principal manual for Special Forces (SF) doctrine. It describes SF roles, missions, capabilities, organization, mission command, employment, and sustainment operations across the range of military operations.

Topics include:

- The History of Special Forces-World War II, The Cold War, and Modern Special Forces
- The Role of Special Forces
- Special Forces Guidance and Principal Tasks
- The Organization of Special Forces-US Special Operations Command and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
- Employment of Special Forces-County Teams, Theater of Operations, and Training Programs
- Unconventional Warfare and Foreign Internal Defense

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Alex Lynch:

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Terry Sugg:

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