

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDER
AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS
COMMAND**

**AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS
COMMAND MANUAL 10-410**

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Operations

**OPERATIONS PLANNING:
PRESENTATION OF AIR FORCE
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

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This manual implements Air Force Mission Directive AFMD 6 and Air Force Policy Directive AFPD 10-4, *Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, for AFSOC unique units and capabilities. This document clarifies and updates the AFSOC command and control system as well as increases the readability, adds (T-0) annotations, and changes AFI to an AFSOC Manual. This manual provides general guidance on the presentation of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) active duty forces and AFSOC gained Air Reserve Component (ARC) forces consisting of the Air National Guard (ANG) and the US Air Force Reserve (USAFR). It identifies command relationships, missions, functions, and responsibilities for AFSOC and its components. This guidance applies to all AFSOC units, to include Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) units when mobilized. This instruction does not apply to the Civil Air Patrol. See **Attachment 1**, for abbreviations used in this instruction. This publication may not be supplemented or further implemented. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. The authorities to waive wing/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier ("T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3") number following the compliance statement. See AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the requestors

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document removes reference to rescinded AFI10-410 and adds implementation of Air Force Mission Directive AFMD 6 and Air Force Policy Directive AFRPD 10-4 in the purpose statement.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (AFSOF)

1.1. Background. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is both an Air Force major command (MAJCOM) and the air component to United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), a unified combatant command (UCC).

1.1.1. Major Command (MAJCOM) Responsibilities. The Commander, AFSOC (COMAFSOC), under the direction of the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), is responsible for training, organizing, equipping, and providing operationally ready Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) to combatant commanders (COCOM). AFSOC also provides operational support forces, Special Operations (SO) test and evaluation, and SO education. The CSAF has designated AFSOC as the Air Force Lead MAJCOM for SO and the Component MAJCOM to Commander, USSOCOM (CDRUSSOCOM).

1.1.2. Air Component Responsibilities. As the Air Force component commander to USSOCOM, COMAFSOC executes or directly supports the following primary SO core activities: direct action, special reconnaissance, countering weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense/security force assistance, hostage rescue and recovery, counterinsurgency, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, military information support operations (MISO), and civil affairs operations. To accomplish these missions, AFSOC has identified the following core missions: specialized air mobility; precision strike; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; special tactics; aviation foreign internal defense; command and control; agile combat support; and Information Operations/MISO. The AFSOC Core Missions are defined in AF Doctrine Annex 3-05, Special Operations.

1.2. Command Relationships.

1.2.1. General. The President and/or Secretary of Defense (SecDef) exercise authority over missions and forces assigned to combatant commands through the combatant commander (CCDR) with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). For purposes other than operational direction of forces assigned to the combatant commands, the President and/or Secretary of Defense exercise authority and control through the service secretaries and service chiefs of staff.

1.2.2. Operational Command Relationships (operational direction of forces assigned to Combatant Commands) are defined in Joint Pub 1, Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States.

1.2.2.1. Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all active and reserve special operations forces (SOF) are assigned to USSOCOM. The combatant commanders of the various geographic combatant commands (GCCs) exercise operational control (OPCON) of SOF assigned to their theaters through the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) or other designated joint force commander.

1.2.2.2. Operational Control (OPCON) is defined in Joint Pub 1, Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States.

1.2.2.2.1. IAW USSOCOM Directive 10-1, Terms of Reference – Roles, Missions, and Functions of Component Commands, the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Air Component (COMAFSOAC) exercises OPCON over all contiguous United States Contiguous United States (CONUS)-based AFSOF (active duty, reserve, and ANG on Title 10 orders). AFSOC Wing, Group, and Unit commanders exercise command authority consistent with G-Series Orders.

1.2.2.2.2. The combatant commanders of the various GCCs usually exercise COCOM and OPCON of assigned forces. However, per the 11 February 2013 Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum, CDRUSSOCOM will retain COCOM of all SOF and TSOCs. (T-0) GCCs will exercise OPCON of forces attached via a SecDef-approved deployment order. (T-0) A TSOC, as a sub-unified command, are generally delegated OPCON of assigned SOF.

1.2.2.2.2.1. For conventional forces, the JFC normally delegates OPCON to, or executes OPCON through, the Service components (e.g. OPCON of USAF forces delegated to the Commander, Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR)). When a Service component is designated a functional component (e.g. Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC)), the commander of that functional component gains assets from other Service components (e.g. “excess” United States Marine Corps sorties). Unlike the larger joint force, SOF routinely trains jointly and presents forces jointly. The TSOC is the C2 element USSOCOM uses to present joint SOF to the theater Joint Force Commander (JFC). The TSOC normally delegates OPCON of AFSOF to a joint special operations air component commander (JSOACC). Typically, the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command (COMAFSOC) is designated as the JSOACC.

1.2.2.2.2.2. In smaller operations, the JSOACC or COMAFSOAC may be subordinated to a Special Operations Joint Task Force (SOJTF). In this situation, the TSOC may choose to delegate OPCON to the SOJTF commander.

1.2.2.2.2.3. Under certain circumstances, a SOJTF commander may directly exercise OPCON of Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF), reporting to the President/SecDef through the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS).

1.2.2.3. Tactical Control (TACON) is defined in Joint Pub 1, Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States.

1.2.2.3.1. The combatant commanders of the various GCCs exercise TACON of forces deployed to their theaters for exercise purposes. TACON of forward-based and forward-deployed AFSOF is normally executed through a JSOACC.

1.2.2.4. Other Authorities. In addition to Combatant Command (COCOM), OPCON, TACON, and support, recognized operational authorities include Direct Liaison Authority, and Coordinating Authority (See JP 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States for definitions and discussion of these authorities). These relationships are extremely flexible and specific authorities are established based upon the situation.

1.2.3. Administrative Control (ADCON) is defined in Joint Pub 1, Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States.

1.2.3.1. The SECAF exercises primary ADCON of all active duty AFSOF worldwide through CSAF to COMAFSOC, and of Air Force Reserve SOF through the Commander, Air Force Reserve Command. CDRUSSOCOM exercises specified ADCON over all AFSOF through COMAFSOC. CDRUSSOCOM's specified ADCON responsibilities include: developing strategy, doctrine, and tactics; preparing and submitting program recommendations and budget proposals for SOF and other forces assigned to USSOCOM; exercising authority, direction, and control over the expenditure of funds for forces assigned to the Special Operations command and for SOF assigned to other combatant commanders; training assigned forces; conducting specialized courses of instruction for commissioned and noncommissioned officers; validating requirements; establishing priorities for requirements; ensuring the interoperability of equipment and forces; formulating and submitting requirements for intelligence support; monitoring the promotions, assignments, retention, training, and professional military education of SOF officers; ensuring the combat readiness of forces assigned to the Special Operations command; monitoring the preparedness to carry out assigned missions of SOF assigned to other combatant commands; development and acquisition of SO-peculiar equipment; and acquisition of SO-peculiar material, supplies, and services.

1.2.3.2. COMAFSOC is responsible to both CDRUSSOCOM and CSAF for executing their separate world-wide ADCON responsibilities. To ensure that those responsibilities are adequately executed for forward-based or forward-deployed AFSOF, COMAFSOC, in coordination with CDRUSSOCOM and the Commander, Theater Special Operations Command, nominates a Commander, Air Force Special Operations Forces (COMAFSOF) to ensure continuity and integration of operations and to "carry" COMAFSOC's (and hence CDRUSSOCOM's and CSAF's) ADCON authorities forward.

1.2.3.1. COMAFSOC will normally transfer specified elements of ADCON to Air Force installation commanders for AFSOF units assigned/attached to Air Force installations (i.e. AFSOF tenants). The Air Force host installation commander will exercise his/her authority over, and responsibilities for, Air Force forces on his/her base as specified in the applicable order (e.g. Deployment Order (DEPOD)) or agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Agreement). (T-0) Such authorities and responsibilities may include discipline administration under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), protection of assigned forces and assets, billeting, dining, and administrative reporting. Similarly, for AFSOF units operating on expeditionary Air Force installations (i.e. Air Force officer designated as installation commander), COMAFSOC will normally transfer specified ADCON of those forces to the installation commander.

1.3. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). AFSOC is commanded by an Air Force Lieutenant General, who is usually referred to as COMAFSOC. AFSOC is responsible to organize, train, and equip AFSOF and has a full range of functional staff (AFI 38-101). AFSOC is an Air Force MAJCOM, the Air Force Lead MAJCOM for Special Operations, the Air Force Lead MAJCOM for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems, and the Component MAJCOM to USSOCOM.

1.3.1. AFSOF Units. Air Force Special Operations Forces are composed of one major command (MAJCOM), an AFSOC Operations Center, five active duty Special Operations Wings (SOWs), one Air Force Reserve SOW, two Air National Guard SOWs, one overseas SOW and one overseas Special Operations Group (SOG).

Chapter 2

FORCE PRESENTATION FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. Commander, United States Special Operations Command (CDRUSSOCOM). For a list of all forces currently designated as special operations forces, see the SecDef Global Force Management Implementation Guidance (GFMIG), Section II “Assignment of Forces (Forces For Unified Commands),” formerly the “Forces For Memorandum.” The Unified Command Plan (UCP) specifies that CDRUSSOCOM is the SOF Joint Force Provider, responsible for providing combat-ready SOF to other combatant commanders as directed; identifying and recommending global joint sourcing solutions to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), in coordination with the Services and other combatant commanders, from all special operations forces and capabilities; and supervising the implementation of sourcing decisions. For SOF Air Force forces assigned to or gained by AFSOC (generally those forces funded by Major Force Program 11), CDRUSSOCOM works through COMAFSOC to deploy active component and/or mobilize and deploy reserve component forces.

2.2. Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command (COMAFSOC). COMAFSOC is charged with providing trained and ready Air Force special operations forces to the CCDRs. When directed by CDRUSSOCOM, COMAFSOC deploys active component AFSOF and/or mobilizes and deploys reserve component forces.

2.3. Combatant Commanders (CCDRs). Title 10 United States Code, Section 162, states that, “A force assigned to a combatant command or to the United States element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command under this section may be transferred from the command to which it is assigned only by authority of the Secretary of Defense; and under procedures prescribed by the Secretary and approved by the President.” In accordance with the SecDef GFMIG, a CCDR requiring additional forces to meet operational requirements submits a Request for Forces (RFF) to the Joint Staff. The Joint Staff, in coordination with the Joint Force Providers (United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), USSOCOM, United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) and Military Services), applicable combatant commands, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, validates the RFF and identifies a sourcing solution, after which the CJCS certifies and releases force allocations orders (DEPORD, Prepare to Deploy Order (PTDO), Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP) Modifications, Execution Order (EXORD) Modification) under the authority of the SecDef. For a detailed discussion of this process, see the SecDef GFMIG. When forces arrive in theater, the CCDR determines the command relationships of those forces. Normally, OPCON of SOF will be delegated to the TSOC. Other forces required for execution of the SOF mission may also be provided OPCON to the TSOC.

2.4. Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). TSOCs (e.g. Special Operations Command Central, or SOCCENT) conduct analyses of their assigned missions and determine the forces required to accomplish them. If forces assigned are inadequate, they generate RFFs for submission to their combatant commanders for validation and forwarding to the SecDef. When special operations forces arrive in theater, the combatant commanders will normally delegate OPCON of those forces to the TSOC for mission execution and may delegate OPCON of other forces required for execution of the SOF mission. The TSOC may conduct reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of forces made available by the CCDR to prepare them for combat operations. Once those forces are ready, the TSOC makes them available to the Joint

Forces Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC) (usually the same commander, but has a different staff function). The JFSOCC executes command and control of forces provided for combat operations.

2.5. CONUS-Based Units. Air Force units (e.g. 1 SOW, 4 SOS) are established through publication of G-Series orders under the authority provided the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) under 10 U.S.C. § 8013. CDRUSSOCOM exercises COCOM of AFSOF while COMAFSOC has the responsibility to organize, train, and equip forces to present to combatant commanders. When directed by the SecDef, CDRUSSOCOM as the SOF joint force provider, presents forces to GCCs.

2.6. OCONUS-Based Units. Air Force units (e.g., 353 SOG, 67 SOS) are established through publication of G-Series orders under the authority provided the SECAF under 10 U.S.C. § 8013. These forces are OPCON to the geographic combatant commanders by the GFMIG. The GCCs usually execute OPCON of forces from those units through the TSOC; however, the geographic combatant commander may provide forces from those units OPCON to another geographic commander after coordination with USSOCOM, as the SOF Joint Force Provider and at the direction of the SecDef.

2.7. Expeditionary Units. Expeditionary units (e.g. 27 ESOG-S, 318 ESOS) are established through publication of G-Series orders under the authority provided the SECAF under 10 U.S.C. § 8013. Air Force special operations forces attached OPCON (Change of Operational Control) to a combatant commander under a SecDef DEPORD or EXORD are administratively attached to those units to fulfill the SECAF's requirement to provide support to those forces. The geographic combatant commanders usually exercise OPCON of the forces assigned to the expeditionary units in their area of responsibility (AOR) through the TSOC and JSOACC, and CDRUSSOCOM and the SECAF provide ADCON support (SOF-unique and Service-common, respectively) to the forces assigned to the expeditionary units through the COMAFSOC.

2.8. Overview of the RFF Process.

2.8.1. Generating the RFF. When a CCDR is given a mission, he conducts a mission analysis during which he identifies the forces required to meet operational requirements and tasks to subordinates – to include tasks for the SOF component. The TSOC or, when established, the JFSOCC conducts a mission analysis for those tasks that the CCDR has given him and similarly identifies the forces required to meet operational requirements. If the TSOC/JFSOCC determines that he requires SOF air assets in excess of those assigned to him (to include Special Tactics Squadrons, Special Operations Weather Team, and SOF Tactical Air Control Parties), he submits a request for forces (RFF) to the CCDR for validation. The CCDR's staff ensures that there are no assets assigned or attached to his command that can satisfy the TSOC/JFSOCC requirement and, if there are none, submits the RFF to the Joint Staff for validation. The CCDR will also submit RFFs for non-SOF Air Force forces to the Joint Staff, some of which may be sourced from non-SOF personnel assigned to AFSOC (e.g. Expeditionary Combat Support).
(T-0)

2.8.2. Sourcing Requests for Air Force SOF. Per the GFMIG, the Joint Staff, in coordination with the Joint Force Providers (USSTRATCOM, USSOCOM, USTRANSCOM, and Military Services), applicable combatant commands, and the Office of Secretary of Defense, validates the RFF and identifies a sourcing solution. Since the UCP specifies that CDRUSSOCOM is the SOF Joint Force Provider, RFFs for SOF air capabilities will be forwarded to USSOCOM

for feasibility assessment, validation, and sourcing. **(T-0)** In turn, USSOCOM will request a feasibility assessment from AFSOC as the Service component to USSOCOM. **(T-0)** AFSOC will look at what forces are available globally (CONUS and OCONUS), and make a sourcing recommendation to USSOCOM. **(T-0)** If the recommended solution is to source forces from another geographic combatant command, USSOCOM will coordinate with that command before submitting the recommended solution to the Joint Staff. **(T-0)**

2.8.3. Sourcing Requests for Non-SOF. Since the SecDef GFMIG specifies that the CJCS, through the Director, J3 (DJ3), is the Primary Joint Force Provider for conventional forces, RFFs for conventional capabilities will be forwarded to the Joint Staff for feasibility assessment, validation, and sourcing. **(T-0)** In turn, DJ3's staff will request a feasibility assessment from the USAF and Air Combat Command (ACC), as the Service component. **(T-0)** In coordination with the Air Force Personnel Center, ACC will look at what forces are available globally (CONUS and OCONUS), and make a sourcing recommendation. **(T-0)** If the recommended solution is to source forces from another geographic combatant command, the Joint Staff will coordinate with that command before submitting the recommended solution. **(T-0)** ACC, in coordination with the Air Force Personnel Center Directorate of Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) Operations (AFPC/DPW), may also submit requests for reserve augmentation to the AFRC Force Generation Center for Global Force Management (GFM) and non-GFM backfill, in-place, rotational, and emergent requirements. AFSOC forces are largely aligned to the Enabler Library; however, AFSOC has a number of forces (generally those forces funded by other than Major Force Program 11) that are included in the AEF system and are vulnerable to AEF tasking.

2.8.4. Deploying Forces in Response to the RFF. Once the RFF has been validated and a sourcing solution identified, the CJCS certifies and releases force allocation orders (DEPORD, PTDO, GFMAP Modifications, EXORD Modification) under the authority of the SecDef. The force allocation orders will direct the losing CCDR to relinquish OPCON and the gaining CCDR to assume OPCON of the deploying force at a specific point in space or time but generally does not specify command relationships below the CCDR. **(T-0)** Once the orders are released, the CCDR usually determines the command relationships of the inbound forces (usually, OPCON of SOF will be delegated to the TSOC, while other forces required for execution of the SOF mission may also be provided OPCON to the TSOC). **(T-0)** COMAFSOC will publish G-Series orders for expeditionary units to which deploying Air Force SOF will be attached and, in coordination with the TSOC, designate a COMAFSOF for the theater (if one is not already designated). **(T-0)** For AFSOC personnel deploying in support of AEF rotations, the theater COMAFFOR will establish the units to which the deploying AFSOC personnel will be attached.

Chapter 3

COMMAND AND CONTROL OF AFSOF

3.1. Global Commitment. The Air Force special operations mission is supported by global special operations command and control networks provided by USSOCOM, AFSOC, and the TSOC commanders. Expansion of this network is necessary during wartime, contingencies, and exercises to support an increase in operating locations and aircraft utilization rates. United States European Command and Pacific Command have permanently assigned forces, a designated Commander of Air Force Special Operations Forces (COMAFSOF), and a standing theater Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC). The other theaters are provided a designated COMAFSOF with the forces deployed to their AOR that is usually designated the Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander by the TSOC.

3.2. SOF Theater Command and Control. SOF Command and Control is defined in Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-05, Special Operations.

William W. Whittenberger, Brig Gen, USAF
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Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

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AFPD 10-4, *Operations Planning: Air & Space Expeditionary Force*, 4 April 2019

AFI 10-401, *Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 7 December 2006

AFI 10-402, *Mobilization Planning*, 8 March 2018

AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*, 1 December 2015

AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization*, 31 January 2017

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 6 March 2020

Air Force Doctrine Annex 3-05, *Special Operations*, 30 January 2019

Joint Pub 1, *Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 25 March 2013

USSOCOM Directive 10-1, *Terms of Reference – Roles, Missions, & Functions of Component Commands*, 15 December 2009

Adopted Forms

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC—Air Combat Command

AEF—Air Expeditionary Force

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFMAN—Air Force Manual

AFSOCMAN—AFSOC Manual

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive

AFRIMS—Air Force Records Information Management System

AFSOC—Air Force Special Operations Command

AFSOF—Air Force Special Operations Force(s)

CDR—Commander

COMAFSOAC—Commander, Air Force Special Operations Air Force Component

COMAFSOF—Commander, Air Force Special Operations Forces

DEPORD—Deployment Order

ESOG—Expeditionary Special Operations Group

ESOS—Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron

EXORD—Execution Order

GCC—Geographic Combatant Command

GFMAP—Global Force Management Allocation Plan

GFMIG—Global Force Management Implementation Guidance

ISR—Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

JFACC—Joint Force Air Component Commander

JFC—Joint Force Commander

JSOAC—Joint Special Operations Air Component

MISO—Military Information Support Operations

OCONUS—Outside of the Contiguous United States

OPCON—Operational Control

OSD—Office of the Secretary of Defense

PTDO—Prepare to Deploy Order

RDS—Records Disposition Schedule

RFF—Request For Forces

SOCCENT—Special Operations Command Central

SOJTF—Special Operations Joint Task Force

SOS—Special Operations Squadron

TACP—Tactical Air Control Party

UCC—Unified Combatant Command

UCMJ—Uniform Code of Military Justice

UCP—Unified Command Plan

USEUCOM—United States European Command

USPACOM—United States Pacific Command

USSOCOM—United States Special Operations Command

USSTRATCOM—United States Strategic Command

USTRANSCOM—United States Transportation Command