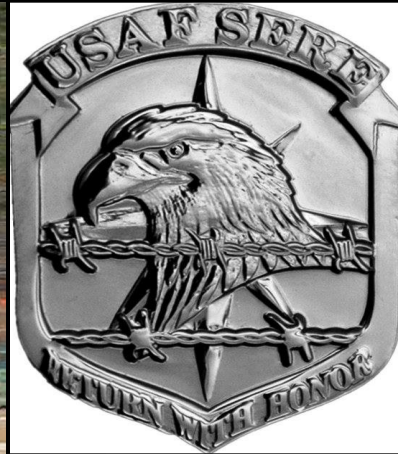




FANGS OUT

396th ATRS NEWSLETTER
CSAREX SPECIAL EDITION
JANUARY 2016

Celebrating Fifteen Years of Operation TALON EAGLE CSAREX





OP TALON EAGLE CSAREX HISTORY

The origins of Operation TALON EAGLE Combat Search and Rescue Exercise (CSAREX) was very simple. In the summer of 1999, cadre discussed the need for operations and training of cadet personnel in the Life Support section of the curriculum. As talks progressed, it was seen that a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) exercise to test these life support skills of the cadets' would be needed. Since Airmanship was the only game in town at the time, it was decided that a simulated combat scenario behind enemy lines would help do the trick. The matter of how hard a scenario was going to be "played" was the only question.

The cadre made up of both Civil Air Patrol (CAP) cadets, and others from Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (AFJROTC) discussed the issue. Both programs had some type of training in some basic SERE skills to allow these young people to survive off the land. But, neither really addressed the other combat related skills that a military aviator would need to know and execute in a hostile environment. So they designed an exercise combining several different skill sets to test their ability just as the U.S. military branches do with their airmen.

Operations

The overall operation would be treated as a Large Force Employment (LFE) of Allied Air Forces tasked with several targets as executed by U. S. forces in support of Coalition Command in a specific Area of Operations (AOR). As such, the BLUE Forces Briefing would entail multiple allied air and ground assets employed against enemy RED Forces. As



the cadet listens on their communications equipment, they would hear exactly what forces would be deployed for the operation determining whether or not they could be used in the scenario to help them. These could be air-to-ground assets like A-10 Hawgs or AH-64 Apache, or possibly larger assets like B-52 BUFF's or even E-3 Sentry's. Using the actual call signs as heard on the freq would help bring realism to the simulation. The cadet would then move through the area evading capture from enemy forces, all the while maintaining contact with friendly forces arranging for rescue and hopefully recovery.

SERE Skills

The cadet would also demonstrate their required SERE skills to bring to the fight. Fire starting, signaling (in both night time and daylight environments), evasion tactics and techniques, communications with both air and ground assets for proper rescue, and identification of enemy assets on the battlefield. These would be just a few of the areas that would be graded by the staff during the op.



Resistance Training

One of the most valuable skills that the cadet would be required to demonstrate is that of Resistance Training (RT) while after Conduct After Capture (CAC). The RED Forces would have a mock Prisoner of War (POW) camp set up so that each cadet would have to go through this important skill set. Using their knowledge of the American Forces Code of Conduct, each cadet would show their ability to handle the stressors of being held captive by the enemy.

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The valuable lessons from Vietnam, Desert Storm and other conflicts, the cadet would see first hand their own ability to handle their own conduct while in enemy hands. They would also look for the opportunity to escape in order to rejoin friendly forces with hopeful rescue and recovery behind simulated enemy lines.

Opposing Forces

The enemy RED Forces, or Opposing Forces (OPFOR) would represent the forces that would hunt down to capture the cadet during the operation. These highly trained personnel have evolved over the years to now become the highly regarded professionals representing the enemy today. The 396th Guards Red Banner Opposing Forces Flight (396 GRBOPFOR FLT) handles multiple training scenarios for the student Life Support

cadets. Over the years this element has grown to now have specialists that not only become subject matter experts (SME) in certain areas of the enemy, but also has a central training theme by providing Russian language skills, Russian style military uniforms with proper grade insignia, along with other unique abilities with interrogation that sets this specific unit apart from others. It is a Special Ops flight that is geared with their own academic training, promotion in ranks and working environment that brings the most realistic portrayal of Russian forces. These staff and cadets are the cream of the crop coming in from across the U.S. to fulfill their role of RED FORCES. They are proud to represent the Motherland in their quest for world communist domination. These forces also augment other major operations throughout the entire Life Support curriculum.

Real Time Intelligence

With the advent of technology assisting the training of cadets, real time intelligence can now be used. Cadets can see actual target sets, view enemy air defenses like surface-to-air (SAM) missile sites, and get a better picture of their enemy order of battle (ORBAT) as they would experience in an Command Post, Tactical Operations Center, or Combined Air Operations Center. Using these type of tools exposes personnel not only on the way the enemy deploys their weapon systems, but also allows them to prepare proper briefing and debriefing tools to learn the military methodology within the intelligence arena. Being immersed into the intelligence world brings infinite possibilities with regard to training, deployment of assets, learning enemy ORBAT and exposing the cadet to how our intelligence services gather information in this cyberspace connected world. This brings in the academic classroom side of the house to the practical application side through TALON EAGLE CSAREX.



World Wide Military Operations

In every operation each and every staff officer, cadet and civilian contractor sees how the synergy of the basic Cadet Career Fields are combined in a seamless operation which is fostered within a real world scenario. Bringing to the front potential threats from Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are some of the countries portrayed during this signature USAFX operation. Airmanship cadets; Special Tactics cadets; along with Air Intelligence cadets work together to provide the student aircrew the ability to utilize their SERE skills throughout the simulated combat environment. Returning staff continue to lean upon their lessons learned to improve this vital simulated combat rescue Life Support exercise.



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Y'all great job!

WELCOME
TO
MOHAMAR MOTEL

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR STAY HERE
PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

- LIBYAN AIR FORCE CERTIFIED
- RED CRESCENT APPROVED
- MEMBER AAA
- IAF TARGET APPROVED



OP TALON EAGLE CSAREX HISTORY



WELCOME
GREAT SATAN
IMPERIALIST
PIG DOG
GEN MOSHEV REZAI
BASIS & MUSTAZAFIN
ALLAH
CURSE YOUR FAMILY
AAA APPROVED
MORAL TARGET 000
IAF TARGET APPROVED

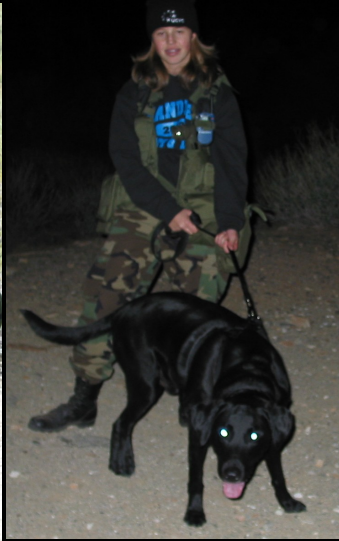




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OP TALON EAGLE CSAREX HISTORY



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Nothing could have prepared me for Talon Eagle. Of course, a few fire building lessons and a good night's sleep wouldn't have hurt, but I had never experienced anything like this before in my life. I am grateful I was able to participate in this operation and I will never forget the skills I learned and the fear of being on the run.

I woke up Saturday morning anxious. The butterflies in my stomach left little room for an appetite, but I still tried to choke down a few bites of eggs and breakfast bars. The only thing I really remember from that morning was the desperate need to use the bathroom and my hands getting sweaty due to my apprehension. Throughout the whole briefing I was lost. Enemy assets were being named and details were provided but it was all going through one ear and out the other—this is when I realized I was in way over my head. We learned what we could about hole up sites in ten minutes, my only regret is that we weren't able to gain any experience before the operation began because I was definitely underprepared. The face painting was a nice way to release the tension before the exercise. I felt bad for SMACK 5 because I put on her face paint and I honestly had no idea what I was doing but I put in a good effort, however, I found out that putting blotches of paint on someone's face was a little harder than I had imagined, and according to SMACK 2, I was doing a bad job. Then we were buckled into the complicated harness of a parachute and the next thing I remember was Capt. Bogert telling us we had ten minutes to find a hole up site.

Crap. It's happening. It's starting.

A big lesson in life is to learn from your mistakes, and I made a lot of mistakes that day. Mistake number one would be forgetting to bring my survival manual with me. That small little green book was resting quite comfortably in my bag. In my tent. At my campsite.

Great. So when the operation began, SMACK 5 (who also failed to bring the book) and I ran to our campsite to retrieve it. With our heads clouded with fear/nerves/pressure/excitement we were referred to as "headless chickens" because we spent nearly the entire ten minutes running around, completely lost, and trying desperately to find cover. Finally we all found hole up sites within a twenty yards of each other and after a few minutes of attempting to camouflage ourselves, it was silent.

Mistake number two would be my hole up site. It sucked, and I knew it. I had cover on one side, but my other side was completely exposed. I tried to saw off a few parts of a nearby bush for cover and it gave me very little, but I was so afraid that my noise and exposure would give away my position I didn't bother to get more vegetation to hide behind. So I curled up behind a tree and prayed for the best. Due to my position I had very limited mobility, so when I heard footsteps above me but couldn't see anything my heart stopped. *This is it. It's real now. There are people looking for me and they're going to be able to find me.* However, it wasn't until about two hours into the operation I was found by Col. Lowrie. To my surprise I was told my hole up site was pretty good and just needed some more cover, so after he left, I crawled around and grabbed some more branches and took the time to cover my tracks. I then dug a hole under my tree to attempt to bury myself, only to find out that the roots would be in my way and I could only dig about five inches deep. I placed the branches all around me and attempted to cover all my sides to blend in. I thought I had done a good job, but when OPFOR came by they spotted me immediately. Apparently I didn't cover myself as well as I thought I did. After that patrol left I moved down about thirty feet until I found a low hanging tree surrounded by dead bushes. I gathered some more dead bushes and crawled under the



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tree, this time making sure to place a few branches and twigs in my LBE and between my arms as I curled up into a ball in an attempt to camouflage myself more.

My third mistake was not calling in on the radio. With all the pressure of finding a good hole up site I had completely forgotten to call in. I tried to radio my wingman and when I didn't hear anything back I decided to wait a while. I think I waited too long (and fell asleep) because when I checked my watch again an hour had already passed. I immediately turned on my radio and heard someone calling for me. Within ten minutes a patrol came near and I was so nervous. I didn't move a muscle, took shallow breaths, and prayed they would walk right past me. Not my luck. Right when the Iranian soldier found me my stomach dropped. *This is it. I'm being taken to the camp, and it's only 1400 hours!* But thankfully he didn't capture me, and he actually complimented my hole up site and said it was very good. After the patrol left I was beaming with pride. I had more confidence and realized that I was getting better. So I went to find another hole up site. Third time's the charm, right? When I travelled down a little farther from my last site, I struck camouflage gold. Right at the side of the wash was a dirt platform raised about two feet above the wash, completely covered on one side by a dead tree and another low hanging tree. A third tree was lying across the left side, providing perfect cover from the path ten feet above. I could lay across on my stomach and cover my boots in dead tree branches, and my right side was mostly covered by other vegetation in the area, the only concern was my head had the least amount of cover. I grabbed a few rocks and placed them



over my body and beside my head to hopefully break up the silhouette and I waited. It wasn't a perfect hole up site, but it was better than anything else I had seen. Even though the dense vegetation around me was an obvious hiding spot, I still trusted my instinct that the enemy wouldn't want to crawl through it the same way I had to, and I was right. After about two hours I could hear the distant shouts of OP-FOR. As they got closer I became more and more nervous. *This is it. They won't let me get away this time.* To my satisfaction I could hear one of the Russians complain about all the trees and since he was a bad guy, he "didn't have to go through there",

which I am grateful for because if they made it through the thick foliage I would have been spotted right away. They made their way around and were within two feet of my head (the area of least coverage) and they failed to recognize me. *Thank God.* After that patrol walked by I decided that it was too close of a call and I might not be so lucky next time. I then spent time digging a large hole long enough to fit my body and as deep as I could get it. I had a quick snack, drank some water, pulled out my radio, and then proceeded to bury myself in the dirt. I took my boonie hat off and had twigs sticking out of my hair and scarf. I was covered in dirt and small rocks and big rocks and branches and anything I could find to help me blend in. I kept one arm available to use the radio, placed my head on a pile of dirt behind a rock and remained motionless (for the most part) until sunset. With only myself and a colony of ants to keep company, the next hour was a long one.

Mistake number four would be failing to set up a plan with the other SMACKs. I felt like a complete idiot for not even trying to talk to the others about our evasion plan because now I'm on my own and I have no idea what to do. So as the sun started to set, I decided this was the time the patrols would be out on the hunt and I imagined I wouldn't be so hidden when a flashlight shone on me.

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It was light enough to see, but it was dark enough that my BDU started to blend in with the environment, so I figured this was the ideal time to move west to the safe zone. I slowly crept out of my hole up site, and made my way down the wash, trying to find a way to head west without silhouetting myself. I heard a patrol above me and I crouched behind a bush; this was when I heard a scuffle behind me. *Oh no!* I was squinting trying to get a better view of whatever made that noise and I saw a dark four legged creature emerge from under a tree. To my amazement, that mystery creature was actually SMACK 5. It was pure luck that we managed to find each other, so after the patrol got far enough away we met under the tree to discuss our plan. Even in the few minutes we were under that tree, we could hear patrols getting closer and we knew that if we headed directly west we would be caught immediately so we decided to head north and avoid the patrols. We agreed it was in our best interest to travel in an indirect route even though it would take longer, we were less likely to be captured. Right as we started to head out we heard the Russians celebrating because they found SMACK 2. *This is our chance.* The Russians were going to be too preoccupied with SMACK 2 that we'll have time to get out of the heavily patrolled area.

Fifth mistake would be having no sense of direction. We quickly made our way north (or what we thought was north) but right as we were about to cross the intersection of a path and the wash, flashlights came near. We were literally in the middle of the wash with no cover near enough so we huddled near a really small bush and to our shock the patrol shined their flashlights right over us and didn't even acknowledge our presence. *Thank God.* After about ten minutes we made it back to our campsite and decided to travel even farther east to avoid the incoming patrols. the next two hours were spent taking water breaks, calling in on the radio, and traveling along the fence line; we weren't against the fence because there was little cover there, but we had it in our sight so we knew which direction we were going (or at least we thought we did). Finally, with only an hour left in the operation we signalled friendly forces, but of course our signal gave away our location and we could see OPFOR getting closer. Panic filled me and I lost all common sense and thought it would be a good idea to try to test my luck and see if they would notice us crouched behind a bush. They did, we weren't hiding very well. *Damn.*

Although I made many mistakes that night, I learned a lot too. I learned how I react under pressure, what constitutes a good hole up site, proper techniques in evasion scenarios, and to never give up.

I know that the training I was receiving would help me in my quest for attending the United States Air Force Academy. Especially when it came down to attempting to pass their rigorous Combat Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape Training. Many cadets attending say that they wish they had some training before going through the gauntlet. Now I know that I CAN pass that phase of training since I had now experienced the best that the USAF Explorers provide.



**C/2LT Anna Mendenhall
THOR 15 ALPHA**



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Before the CSAR exercise began my flight and I had to coordinate and plan for us to be successful out in the field. Using the knowledge that we gained from our lessons in class, our survival manuals, and life support binders we were able to pack effectively and plan out what we bring out into the field. We also had very basic knowledge on a hole up site and the importance of camouflage and breaking up shadows and body parts. We all used this training to attempt to be effective during the exercise.

Having effective supplies for this exercise was vital for our success. All of us Smacks were issued items to help us be effective in the field. We were issued an LBE, which allowed us to carry gear on our person on a load bearing vest. Radios to communicate with each other and friendly forces. We were issued canteens to carry our water supply, which was essential not



only to our success but our safety. Signal mirrors to signal someone that was trying to communicate with us. A flashlight to see in the dark and signaling. Things like scarves and field jackets were also issued out to keep us warm. We needed two kinds of food. Food for when we were at camp and food for when we were out in the field for the actual exercise. For the food at camp I brought canned soup to have for breakfast and anytime that we needed it. For the field I had trail mix and protein bars. I chose those two for the field because they were compact and full of calories. I was only able to use the protein bars, since the trail mix had bright colors mixed with it. Along with food we also needed a knife, a knife is used to cut through things like rope, branches, and strike a flint. We also needed extra batteries for our radios and flashlights. Our gear allowed us to be effective in the field and helped us to be successful.

A hole up site is a simple place that one must stay at for days on end without moving to a new spot or moving at all. It is simple yet complicated. The goal of a hole up sight is to provide shelter while also hiding out. That could mean in a cave covering the entrance with a rock. Or a large bush covering holes with pieces of vegetation. A hole up sight must be comfortable, it must have at least two ways to get out safely, quickly, and quietly. It must be away from buildings, campsites, trails, roads, and any man made object or structure. The enemy can be lazy, they feel the same cold as the survivor and they hate it just as much. They don't want to go off the trail to search in some random bush. They look for a break to take a piss or smoke. So one must use that to their advantage and pick a spot far away from trails and open areas. Staying away from buildings and man made objects is a no-brainer. If there is a building or a man made object that means someone has been there before and someone may go back at some point. Along with being away from trails, open areas, and man made objects, it must be able to break up the shadow of a human body so that it is unrecognizable unless the enemy looks at it for awhile. That could mean a huge bush, up in a tree, or covered by collected brush.

In the hole up sight after everything is concealed and it is time to begin to wait to move or wait for rescue. One must keep watch for enemy patrols and find patterns in their patrols so they can find a window to move. If they are not watching they are listening. Listening on the radio for friendly forces or listening to the surrounding area for sounds that the enemy may make. If not listening, then they are hydrating, if not hydrating, then eating. Eating and drinking is important because it will help to make the hole up site more comfortable and keep the person hiding alive and warm them up.

When I arrived at the squadron I felt very nervous for what lie ahead of me. I carried my gear into the classroom and I nervously waited for everyone to arrive with my dad. We were the first ones to arrive and Capt. Chambers arrived shortly after we did. We all waited for everyone to arrive and prepare to go to Pueblo. While we were at the squadron we were all issued a space blanket, flint and steel, signal mirrors, and ID tags.

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We made sure we had everything we needed and packed everything into Capt. Chamber's truck and Mr. O'Neill's VW Bus. We rode in Col. Lowrie's car nervously to Pueblo. When we arrived we got out and we were told to follow Capt. Chamber's truck to the campsite. So we did, except we had to run to keep up with it and ended up first going to Forsman and then to our campsite. We arrived tired and unloaded our equipment and set up our tents. We made it much harder than it needed to be by not taking our time and making sure the hooks on my tent were secure in the right spot. So after a long process of putting up my tent we were able to put up Mendenhall's and Sotomayor's tent, which was easier since we had just done it once. After we were told by Capt. Chambers to get our gear ready and that he'd be back soon. We got all of our gear together as if we were about to go out into the field and waited. When Capt. Chambers returned we went up to Forsman lodge and were briefed on the plan for the night and the morning and that we needed to figure out times to keep watch. Mendenhall, Sotomayor, and I discussed and argued and came to agree that Mendenhall and Sotomayor would take first watch with C/2Lt Mendoza and that I'd take second watch with C/2Lt O'Neill. After we went back to camp I tried to get as much sleep as I possibly could. Which wasn't much. I woke up often because of the cold and sounds from outside, and I kept waking up until around 0300 when my watch started.

That night it was very cold and since it was a no burn night along with the morning there was no source of warmth. To try and stay warm I triple layered my torso and double layered my legs in clothing. I wore sweatpants underneath my trousers, a sweatshirt underneath my blouse and field jacket, a beanie under my sweatshirt hood, field jacket hood, and boonie hat, and a scarf around the bottom half of my face. None of those things did anything to break the wind that was blowing throughout the night so it became very very brisk and annoyingly cold. Although it was cold it was very difficult to stay awake as well. When I caught myself dozing off I would get up and walk the perimeter of the campsite. I would continue doing that until 0800 when we all had to be awake to eat, begin training for the exercise, and prepare.

When we were getting ready to move to Forsman I was rushing to get everything ready so I could eat something before we got ready to go. As we got ready to move I grabbed my can of potato soup and started eating as fast as I could to the point where it made me feel sick. Little did I know Capt. Chambers was making eggs for everyone in the kitchen at Forsman. I felt dumb for freaking out so much over food even though we would be getting it at Forsman. I ate as much as I could so that I wouldn't be hungry during the exercise. After we were finished with breakfast we got ready to move out again so Capt. Bogert could teach us more about how to make a hole up site for a short period of time. He explained to us that it needed to break up our body parts and needed to be away from man made objects, trails, washes, and open areas. We then went to the conference room at the Pueblo building to get briefed on our mission and get issued our line up cards. During the briefing I thought to myself for a second how real all of this seemed and it clicked that OPFOR was really hunting us down and to torture us in the process. That scared the hell out of me. The briefing ended and we went back to the Forsman to apply our face paint. It got very messy but eventually we had everything together and applied and ready to go. Along with the face paint I was put into a bandage to simulate a broken clavicle since I actually had a broken clavicle. I was surprised that they didn't put me into a makeshift sling since that

was standard treatment of a broken clavicle but I didn't complain since I wanted use of my left arm. At around 1010 we went out to the crash site with Capt. Bogert turned us loose.

We began running around trying to find a spot while Capt, Bogert watched. We kept going into areas where we weren't allowed to go. we were supposed to stay on the eastern side of the camp area. We wasted precious time running around like confused chickens when we could've listened and gotten stuff done. I found a spot between two small bushes, I grabbed some shrubbery and tried to cover myself up. Mendenhall and Sotomayor went and found spots in the wash



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20 or 30 feet away from me. I called in and reported to my wingman that I was downed and that they would make contact in one hour. After that I was supposed to check in on the bottom of the hour. I just didn't remember to for the whole exercise. I also messed up by saying that there were hostile units in the hostile area. After I made that transmission I didn't use my radio other than to change frequencies. My hole up sight was very rushed, but I did watch Col. Lowrie walk past me around 20 feet away. I was found once and told that I needed to cover up my tracks and cover up with more brush. I collected more brush from identical bushes around and covered up the spots where they could see me, I thought I was good so I watched and waited for OPFOR. I got very bored and became drowsy. I ended up falling asleep and waking up to "Is that stupid American asleep?" 2 hours later. For some reason I was not taken in but I was told again what was wrong, that time my boonie hat was sticking out and gave me away. After they found me I moved to a new hole up sight under a large bush. The bush was in a wash but it was very large and covered a lot of my body but needed more vegetation around. I ran around using a saw to get more and more things to cover me up. I thought I had enough but I was dead wrong. I had no clue, but I had left a hole open facing directly towards the eagle's nest which got me caught without me even knowing it. I should have known though. C/2Lt Mendoza looked dead at me through the hole I let open and walked over to my hole up site, messed with the bush then walked away. I thought nothing of it so I stayed put until nightfall.



C/2LT Gabe Garza

BOLT 17 ALPHA

When night came I began to get ready to move. Then the first patrol came through. It scared me into staying put until I couldn't hear them anymore. Just to be safe since they had already walked past me I stayed put thinking they didn't see me. Then they came around a second time and found me. When they found me I didn't move and I didn't talk. They drug me out of my hole up site along with my bag and took me to the POW camp. I did not hide sensitive information very well. They found my lineup card and compromised all of the authentication. They took everything on me but three things, my knife, my radio, and my ISOPREP authentication number. Both my knife and my radio were in my right pocket and my authentication number was in my sock on my right foot. They interrogated me and tried to get me to tell who my friends were and why we were there. I remained silent unless I had to answer other questions. They brought me to the Stone lodge where there was a fireplace with a fire in it. At one point both of my interrogators had left the building. I looked out the window once and they were both standing outside. So I waited, when I looked again neither of them were there. So I opened the door to run like hell to another hole up site. I intended to go west towards the safe zone so I could be rescued. I ended up looping through the parking lot into a hole up sight near the entrance to the camping area near the front gate. I waited for a bit and patrols started to get very close to me. I heard someone take a piss nearby. Shortly after someone came very close to finding me, but one of the OPFOR gave a whistle and two clicks and he went away. After that I decided that it was a terrible spot and I hid near the obstacle course for the rest of the exercise. Even though I had my radio I didn't use it because I didn't know who to call or what frequency to be on. I just lost all of my sense and stayed put. In a real life situation I would have never been found by rescue forces and I would have possibly been killed.

During the debrief I walked in and everyone looked at my like I had an alien on my forehead. I had no idea what was going on. I was tired, dirty, and ready for food. We were told about the things we could do different and the biggest thing for me was to use my radio. Everyone laughed at what went on during the exercise Sotomayor wouldn't eat chocolate and I wouldn't use my radio. After the debrief was over we went and got some food to eat. There were bratwursts, burgers, and chips. We all hung out at the tables and talked about the exercise, past OTF's and the contents of the doofer books. We all talked and had a good time before we went back to camp to go to sleep. Overall this exercise tested our wits, intuition, and knowledge. It was challenging for everyone yet we enjoyed it. We learned about the will to survive and to use the resources that we have and keep our will to escape and survive alive.

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Before going out on CSAREX I read articles about it that seemed really intense and a little terrifying but mostly exciting. I was extremely excited to go out on the exercise and be out at south mountain for three days. I was a little jittery before actually going out on the exercise and was just a bit nervous about how intense it would be but I calmed down after starting the exercise. It wasn't as bad as I anticipated it to be but still a little intense but mostly fun with all the things we did. Before we actually went out to south mountain I felt like I over prepared for the exercise when I saw everything I brought compared to my fellow Smacks.

A little before we headed towards south mountain I had met the other officers that were going to be out on the exercise looking for us and I was a little freaked out meeting all these people that I had never seen before it was a bit intense. It was even more intense once my fellow Smacks and I were punished because one of us *cough* Garza did not know their Code of Conduct and got us punished when everything was going so well and I kinda wanted to smack him for it. After we did push ups, we had taken pictures and finally got in the car and it was a bit awkward because I had to be in the middle of my fellow smacks as always because I am the smallest, but other than that the car ride was okay. Once we got to south mountain there were no moments of rest and my fellow Smacks and I had to run after red truck to our campsite and that was all right except for the part where I tripped over a log and went flying in the air and ate dirt. My team mate stopped to make sure I was alright and I was but I started laughing really hard because I looked so stupid and just kept chasing after the truck until me and the other Smacks made it to our campsite.

Once the Smacks and I got to our campsite we started setting up our tents which was a complicated process since none of us knew what to do. We managed to get our camp set up and once we did that the Smacks and I headed up to Pueblo to be issued a couple things before the exercise and get formally introduced to the other officers which was a bit awkward and terrifying since there was a lot of people and I'm only use to having Lieutenant's Mendoza, O'Neill and Colonel Lowrie in charge of me and the other Smacks. After that we went back to our campsite and decided that the other female smack and I would take the first watch which wasn't bad at all until we shined a flashlight and caught one of the lieutenants spying on us and once we spotted them they said "I could have killed you from there". The other female smack and I felt awkward after that because we realized how long they were sitting there while we had dumb conversations that were really awkward especially if the lieutenant heard us. The lieutenant never mentioned anything of the conversation we had but we were pretty sure that they heard us, but after that we finished up our shift and finally slept.

The morning that the exercise began Lieutenant Mendoza violently shook our tent but I didn't wake up until the other Smack started shaking me and telling me to wake up because I thought that the tent was shaking because of the wind. After the other smacks and I got our gear together we headed up to Pueblo and got briefed on the exercise. Then the Smacks and I splattered camouflage paint on each others faces which was one of my favorite parts of the exercise. After we finished that up the Smacks and I finally went out on the exercise and ran around for a while to find a hole up site and got yelled at by one of the Capt. Bogert were told that we looked liked chickens without heads running around. After a while we all found pretty good hole up sites but I felt that my hole up site was the best since nobody could find me for a while. One of my favorite parts about it was that I could take a nap there and

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made friends with a prairie dog in my hole up site and a few ants. The only thing I worried about in my hole up site was having to go pee which I did and was scared to get caught while peeing because that would have been really awkward and embarrassing.



Once I headed out of my hole up site I tried to find my fellow Smacks and by pure luck I found the other female and if I had not I would have been completely lost and done for. The other Smack and I made a pretty good team and went a long time without getting captured and at one moment we thought we were going to get caught when we hid and a flashlight shone right on us but by pure luck they completely missed us and did not see us. Once enemy forces finally left we kept heading west and signaled for friendly forces but once we did that the enemy saw our light and started looking for us and we were disappointed because we did not get caught until the last two hours of the exercise. We knew it was enemy forces looking for us be-

cause we heard the Iranian voice which was pretty hilarious. After being captured for a while I escaped a little after my partner did and since I got separated from my partner I was screwed because I had no idea what I was doing.

It wasn't long after escaping that the exercise ended and after that the Smacks and I were called back to Pueblo for debriefing on the exercise which wasn't as bad as I thought it would be it was actually pretty exciting. The other female smack and I headed back to Pueblo and sat down while the other officers looked for the remaining smack. The other smack was finally found and we all sat down and the smack who had just been found started acting cocky about how he hid his radio somewhere and how the enemy never found it. Then Capt. Bogert asked why he never turned his radio on to check in with friendly forces and possibly get rescued and he responded with "I was thinking about life." Capt. Bogert made a reference to a movie called "Radio". In the movie the Cuba Gooding was Radio and Capt. Chambers asked Garza to hold his radio to his face and smile which made him look like the main character and we all laughed about it for a good long time. After we all stopped I looked at him and burst into tears and we all started laughing again and that's how he got his call sign "Radio". That part was the highlight of the whole exercise for me because i just could not stop laughing.

Overall the exercise was fun and a lot more exciting than I thought it would be and not as intense due to my training beforehand. But overall it was a pretty amazing experience.



C/WO Katherina Sotomayor
SCARFACE 17 ALPHA

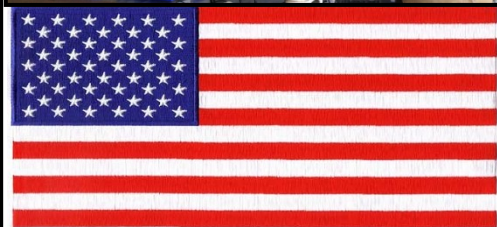




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امریکایی هستم - نهان شما جز نبردم -
 بناسبت دجام پر بختی صبرم از شما
 مساعدت فرمائید و دست خوارم -
 خوارم خدمت ترا بکنم که وسایل سلاح
 مرا فراهم کند بپردازم و مرا بهت کنید که من
 تحت نظارت دولت خود را گذارم -
 نهایت کفایت فراهم کرد که هیچ اشکالی
 نداشته باشید - دردم بشما پاداش تا ابدی
 خواهد داد -

اگر امریکایی دلا آنکه رفتنک، اما احتیاج
 الی مساعدتک للحصول علی الطعام
 والاروی والوقایة، ارجو کنان تاخذنی
 الی من یستطیع ان یحمیننی وان یرحمیننی
 الی اهلی . سأعمل بكل طاقتی لخدمتک
 من ای ضرر ، وان حکومتی ستکانتک

I AM AN AMERICAN. I DO NOT SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE. MISFORTUNE FORCES ME TO SEEK YOUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FOOD, SHELTER AND PROTECTION. PLEASE TAKE ME TO SOMEONE WHO WILL PROVIDE FOR MY SAFETY AND SEE THAT I AM RETURNED TO MY PEOPLE. I WILL DO MY BEST TO SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU. MY GOVERNMENT WILL REWARD YOU.

