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POLICY OR PRECEDENT

SUBJECT: USASOC Requirements for Transitioning ARSOF Soldiers DATE: 2/27/23

POLICY NUMBER:	ORIGINATING SECTION:	ORIGINATOR:	PHONE#:
23-04	AOHP-W (600o)	Bridgett M. Byrd	806-3359

APPROVED BY: JASON A. JOHNSTON, COLONEL, USA, Chief of Staff JOHNSTON.JASON.ALAN.1153825994 Digitally signed by JOHNSTON.JASON.ALAN.1153825994 Date: 2023.02.23 12:22:30 -05'00'

SYNOPSIS:

1. Purpose. To establish guidelines and expectations for how the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and component subordinate units will support transitioning Soldiers and Army special operations forces (ARSOF) Veterans.

2. Scope. This policy applies to all elements of the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Headquarters (HQ), component subordinate commands and component subordinate units.

3. General. Approximately 250,000 Soldiers across the Department of Defense (DoD) transition to Civilian life each year. Consequently, the Army provides standard programs to Soldiers that support their administrative separation from the military. Although these services are helpful, USASOC units have found that the unique nature of the ARSOF community requires either additional or different services for a successful transition. To address these gaps, some component subordinate units have administered programs that provide relevant information, resources, and tools to its transitioning ARSOF professionals and their loved ones. However, many of these emergent programs are novel efforts that lack resources and institutional knowledge. USASOC desires to build a supporting infrastructure that can help bolster these component subordinate unit efforts. This support will come in the form of codification of standards; Benevolent and Veteran Organizations liaising; lessons learned sharing; advocacy of resources; and any other activities that can provide Soldiers with the tools, networking, communication, and knowledge for a successful transition from service into their next career.

PRESCRIBING DIRECTIVES: Army regulation (AR) 600-81, Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program; AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations; AR 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program; AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations; AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges; DoD Instruction 1332.35, Transition Assistance Program for Military Personnel; Army Directive 2019-26, Implementation of Changes to the Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Program.

DISTRIBUTION:
This publication is available in electronic media and is intended for A5 distribution. Paper copies will be provided for those not having access to e-media.

OTHER POLICIES AFFECTED:
None

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4. Responsibilities.

a. USASOC Human Performance and Wellness (HPW) will provide oversight and support. Programs will be managed and executed at the O-6 level.

b. All CSUs will appoint a transition coordinator (as a sole task or additional duty) who will be responsible for ensuring each unit remains in compliance with this policy and act as the unit POC for all USASOC transition efforts.

c. For a transitioning Soldier to deploy 12 months prior to their separation date an exception to policy must be signed by the first General Officer in their chain of command. During this period, which includes permissive temporary duty and terminal leave, a Soldiers primary duty will be minimized, and they will be afforded maximum time to complete remaining transition requirements. Units under operational control of Joint Special Operations Command have an exception to this stipulation.

d. At home station an Soldier within 12 months of separation date it will be noted that all transition related appointments will take priority over all unit activities. First line supervisors and/or commanders may not direct Soldiers to reschedule appointments for unit business.

e. All component subordinate units will be required to ensure all ARSOF Soldiers have access to ARSOF specific transition programs. This requirement can be satisfied by developing component subordinate command organic programs or utilizing already established ARSOF programs.

f. ARSOF-specific transition programs should include the below elements:

(1) Administrative Milestones.

(2) Medical Transition Documentation and Retirement Preparation.

(3) Education.

(4) Career Transition.

(5) Psychological Transition.

(6) Life Planning Elements.

(7) Family Support.

(8) Local Support.

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g. All Commanders, at every level, will use this policy in conjunction with the standard operating procedures (SOP) which details further in guidance and information needed to develop a standardized transition program. This SOP is endorsed by the USASOC Chief of Staff and will be reviewed yearly by the USASOC HPW Transition Office.

5. Effective Date. This policy is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded.

(END)

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HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
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AOHP-W (600o)

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Transition Requirements standard operating procedure (SOP) for United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Army special operation forces (ARSOF) Soldiers

1. References:

a. Army regulation (AR) 600-81, Soldier for Life – Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP)

b. AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations

c. AR 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program

d. AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations

e. AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges

f. Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1332.35, Transition Assistance Program for Military Personnel

g. Army Directive 2019-26, Implementation of Changes to the Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Program

2. Purpose. To establish guidelines and expectations for how the USASOC and subordinate units support transitioning Soldiers and ARSOF Veterans.

3. Scope. These procedures apply to commanders, directors, and supervisors of the USASOC Headquarters (HQ), component subordinate commands, and component subordinate units.

4. Responsibilities. For command responsibilities at the USASOC, component subordinate commands and component subordinate unit levels, see the USASOC Policy Requirements for Transitioning ARSOF Soldiers.

5. Summary. The Army provides standard programs to Soldiers that support their administrative separation from the military. All component subordinate units will be required to ensure all ARSOF Soldiers have access to ARSOF specific transition programs. This requirement can be satisfied by developing component subordinate

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units organic programs or utilizing already established programs and other ARSOF units.

a. For a transitioning Soldier to deploy 12 months prior to their separation date, an exception to policy (ETP) must be signed by the first General Officer in their chain of command. During this period, which includes permissive temporary duty and terminal leave, a Soldiers primary duty will be minimized, and they will be afforded maximum time to complete remaining transition requirements. Units under operational control of Joint Special Operations Command have an exception to this stipulation.

(1) If an ETP is signed, the chain of command will have Soldiers, who will have less than 12 months remaining on active duty when they return home from deployment, register for Transition Assistance Program (TAP), complete their Individualized Initial Counseling (IIC) and pre-separation briefing, before they depart. Once returned stateside, they will complete all mandatory TAP requirements.

(2) At home station an Soldier within 12 months of separation date it will be noted that all transition related appointments will take priority over all unit activities. First line supervisors and/or commanders may not direct Soldiers to reschedule appointments for unit business.

b. All component subordinate units will be required to ensure all ARSOF Soldiers have access to ARSOF specific transition programs. This requirement can be satisfied by developing component subordinate commands organic programs or utilizing already established ARSOF programs.

c. ARSOF specific TAPs should include the below elements:

(1) Administrative Milestones.

(2) Medical Transition Documentation and Retirement Preparation.

(3) Education.

(4) Career Transition.

(5) Psychological Transition.

(6) Life Planning Elements.

(7) Family Support.

(8) Local Support.

d. USASOC HQ desires to build supporting infrastructure that can help bolster these component subordinate units efforts. This support will come in the form of codification of standards; Benevolent and Veteran Organizations liaising; lessons learned sharing; advocacy of resources; and any other activities that can provide Soldiers with the tools, networking, communication, and knowledge for a successful transition from the service into their next career.

6. Definitions.

a. ARSOF TAP. Any program that is owned and operated by a ARSOF unit responsible for providing ARSOF Soldiers services that address administrative, psychological, professional, educational, medical, and personal elements of transition to achieve a successful evolution from military life to the civilian sector.

b. ARSOF Veteran: Former Soldier who served within an ARSOF military occupational specialty (MOS) (i.e. 18, 37, 38 series MOS); 15 series or 153 series MOS (Pilots); and 11 series MOS (Rangers). In addition, this category includes all enabler MOSs assigned to a USASOC unit at the time of their transition.

7. Procedures. Guidance and information for unit transition programs:

a. Administrative milestones. TAPs should orient ARSOF personnel to HQ Department of the Army administrative separation requirements.

(1) TAP:

(a) Unit Specific: Mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. Commanders at all levels will ensure TAP is initiated no later than (NLT) 12 months prior to separation/retirement. Soldiers will begin by notifying their command 24 months prior to retirement and 18-12 months if separating/ expiration term of service (ETS) by contacting their unit Transition Program Coordinator to schedule the initial counseling (if applicable), attending a unit/installation transition workshop, and registering for the TAP.

(b) Required. Once registered for TAP, Soldiers will complete the IIC. After IIC is complete, Soldiers will schedule the pre-separation briefing followed by their attendance at TAP workshop classes.

(c) Soldiers enrolled in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) process must register for TAP immediately. Once the Department of the Army (DA) Form 199, Informal Physical Evaluation Board Proceedings, is received, Soldiers can take it to the TAP office for an expedited transition schedule.

(d) NLT 90 days out from transition date, Commanders will ensure all Soldiers have completed their TAP Capstone event in accordance with TAP Career Readiness Standards. The Capstone event must be completed last.

(e) Per AR 600-8-7, all active Army Soldiers will receive the DA pre-retirement briefing, including a Survivor Benefit Plan briefing, at least 12 months before their retirement dates or for medical retirements at the start of the medical retirement process. In cases where a Soldier requests to retire in less than 12 months, the Soldier will attend the next group pre-retirement brief or receive an individual pre-retirement brief from a Retirement Services Officer. It is recommended all qualifying transitioning Soldiers attend the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Care Coalition brief.

(2) Retirement requirements and procedures.

(a) Per AR 635-200, para 12-7, Soldiers who have completed 20 but less than 30-years of active Federal service and who have completed all required service obligations are eligible, but not entitled, to retire upon request. Soldiers must complete at least 20 years of active Federal service and all service obligations by the requested retirement date.

(b) Applying for retirement. Paperwork and processes to apply for retirement are unit-specific. Soldiers should consult their S1/G-1 directorates to submit requests to the appropriate retirement authority. The retirement authority will then notify the Soldier in writing of the effective date of the retirement, if approved.

b. Medical transition documentation and retirement preparation. TAPs should be positioned to direct ARSOF Soldiers to proper points of contact to adequately build a comprehensive health assessment prior to their separation date.

(1) See Battalion Surgeon/Nurse Case Manager 24-36 months out from ETS/Retirement to complete a Medical Record Review for a successful transition.

(2) Consult unit medical representative regarding scheduling medical retirement physical NLT 12 months prior to retirement/ transition date.

(a) Soldiers will not conduct hazardous duty or operational activities and/ or field training post retirement physical completion.

(b) The retirement physical may result in Soldiers being put on profiles or direction to reduce specific activities beyond just hazardous duty. Commanders and first line supervisors will ensure Soldiers remain compliant with Primary Care Manager’s direction.

(3) As part of the Veteran's Opportunity to Work Act, but not included in the TAP process, is the medical process. The Veterans Affairs (VA) now has two programs to assist Soldiers as they transition to Veteran status. It's recommended Soldiers should access the programs at six months, but NLT three months from separation.

(4) Soldiers who are separating and plan to file for disability compensation can file their claim before separation through the VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) program. The VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge program allows Soldiers to apply for VA disability compensation benefits between 180 to 90 days prior to separation. This timeframe permits VA to schedule exams, review service treatment records and evaluate the claim before separation, allowing VA to deliver a decision as soon as possible, sometimes as soon as the day after leaving active duty (https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/).

(5) The DRC Program for Soldiers who have less than 90 days remaining on active duty and is the fastest way to get your VA claim processed. For this program, Soldiers may work with an accredited Veteran Service Organization to file a Pre-Discharge DRC for VA disability compensation. You cannot file a Pre-Discharge DRC if you are enrolled in the IDES Program. To see a full list of exclusions that would remove your Pre-Discharge claim from the DRC Program, go to www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/drc.asp.

(6) The USSOCOM Warrior Care Program is a program of record geared toward ushering Soldiers and their families through recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration phases after life changing events. This program has representatives at every post where SOF units are located. They are postured to help Soldiers who are either working toward returning to the force or transitioning from it. ARSOF transition coordinators should encourage transitioning Soldiers to contact their local USSOCOM Warrior Care Program (Care Coalition) advocates to understand resources and benefits available.

c. Education: Is vital in building a competitive advantage in the private workforce, but it also takes multiple years to complete. Transition programs must have the knowledge and systems in place to enable Soldiers' access to education resources.

(1) Unit programs. Encourage unit transition programs to incorporate education completion opportunities (i.e., certifications, Bachelors degree, and Masters degree programs). Soldiers are encouraged to take advange of these programs throughout their career through tuition and credentialing assistance.

(2) Career Skills Programs (CSP). At six months, all transitioning ARSOF Soldiers should be provided the opportunity to participate in the Army's CSP.

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Commanders are highly encouraged to support Soldiers participation in CSPs. CSPs offer employment skills training that enables Soldiers to capitalize on experience gained in high-demand, highly skilled careers beyond their military service. Completion of all mandatory TAP requirements, to include Capstone, is required prior to the start of any CSP. Soldiers are only authorized to participate in one CSP.

(3) USASOC will work with United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and benevolent organizations to assist component subordinate commands/units transition programs by providing relevant up-to-date transition program opportunities.

d. Career transition. One of the most difficult elements of a Soldier's transition experience is identification and obtainment of a fulfilling occupation that suits the individual's natural skills and ambition. To complete this task, Soldiers need to define ambitions, translate their military experience into civilian terms, and build an effective professional network. There are many resources that can escort each Soldier through these milestones leading up to their transition, predominately Veteran support/benevolent organizations. Unit transition programs should enable Soldiers' access to these resources NLT 12 months from their official transition date.

e. Psychological transition. Soldiers may not realize how much their personal identity is tied to the military community and their unit's esprit de corps. Often, separation from the ARSOF community conveys a feeling of loss of identity, purpose, and support. Unit TAPs should incorporate exercises and tools for Soldiers to actively identify personal attributes, strengths, and weaknesses to better solidify their individual personal identity. Additionally, discussions on common feelings of loss (such as loss of community) should also be included into TAP curriculums to mitigate post-transition shock effects.

f. Life planning elements. The choice of benefits is highly individualized and will change along with life circumstances. Having a plan will assist with the navigation and the complexity of military benefits, weigh the tradeoffs, and make choices which will ensure Soldiers get the most value of their benefits while aligning with their goals and family's best interests. Incorporating modules and resources for items like financial planning and health insurance may be the key takeaways.

g. Family support. When a Soldier separates from the military, their family is also undergoing a life-altering transition. Programs should encourage Soldiers to include their family in the transition process as well as resources for spouses and children. Government and non-government organizations can assist family members with transition services such as expectations, benefits, employment, and well-being.

h. Local support. Many local organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, support Veteran transition. Reach out to transition coordinators for advice regarding local opportunities.

8. Benevolent and Veteran Organizations: Benevolent and Veteran Organizations offer tremendous resources to address all the above elements of transition. USASOC and it's components must establish lines of communication with these organizations to facilitate access to the services they offer. To ensure this communication is executed legally, morally, and ethically, units are to consult their local Staff Judge Advocate/ Judge Advocate General representatives.

9. Point of contact for further assistance regarding the USASOC Transition Requirements SOP, contact the USASOC Human Performance and Wellness Transition office at (910) 806-3359, bridgett.m.byrd.civ@socom.mil or william.morgan@socom.mil.

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Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION:
This publication is available in electronic media and is intended for A5 distribution. Paper copies will be provided for these not having access to e-media.

Glossary

AR • Army regulation

ARSOF • Army special operation forces

CSP • Career Skills Program

DA • Department of the Army

DoDI • Department of Defense Instruction

DRC • Decision Ready Claims

ETP • exception to policy

ETS • expiration term of service

HQ • Headquarters

IDES • Integrated Disability Evaluation System

IIC • Individualized Initial Counseling

MOS • military occupational specialty

NLT • no later than

SOP • standard operating procedure

TAP • Transition Assistance Program

USASOC • United States Army Special Operations Command

USSOCOM • United States Special Operations Command