



UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
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MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5323

9 January 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, 2000 NAVY PENTAGON,
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

SUBJECT: Rotary Wing Support for Naval Special Warfare Command

Gary

1. Navy Rotary Wing (RW) support to Special Operations Forces (SOF), although limited in scope and scale, has been absolutely essential to the joint warfighting effort in Iraq. The performance of the Red Wolves of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Eight Four has been a particularly impressive demonstration of the powerful effects that can be achieved by high quality aircrews in a sustained partnership with ground forces conducting challenging missions under extremely demanding conditions. Together, Navy RW air and joint SOF have made a significant difference where it counts most.

2. I am deeply concerned that this magnificent operational support has not been institutionalized. To my knowledge, there is no formalized agreement by the Navy to continue or expand RW support for either training or operations. In fact, Naval Special Warfare Command's validated requirements for Navy RW support are significantly under-resourced.

3. I believe that assigning selected active and reserve RW assets in direct support of SOF for both training and deployed operations would positively resolve much of the current shortfall. I look forward to hosting or contributing to a senior-level Navy-SOCOM working group that would be formed to specifically address this proposal.

4. Your maritime RW crews are among the unsung heroes of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Long-time members of SOF describe them as superbly qualified, at a standard approaching the Army's famed Night Stalkers.

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is Colonel Robert Toth, DSN 299-0358, robert.toth@socom.mil.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eric".

ERIC T. OLSON
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander

CF:
Commander, Fleet Forces Command