Air Force Co
Desert One

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e: April 24–25, 1980

Forrest L. Marion

(Overleaf) A USAF MC–130E Combat Talon aircraft.

In 1979, Iran was in the midst of an Islamic revolution. After thirty-seven years of rule that many Iranians characterized as secular, immoral, and repressive, a growing instability at the start of the year led the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, to flee to Egypt. Soon after, two million cheering Iranians welcomed a radical cleric, the Ayatollah Khomeini, as he returned from exile to become the country's new ruler. Following President Jimmy Carter's decision to allow the Shah to enter the U.S. for medical treatment, on November 4, 1979, Iranian radicals stormed the American Embassy in Tehran, taking some sixty Americans hostage. The resulting crisis would serve as the backdrop for a dramatic rescue attempt resulting in tragedy at a desolate Iranian desert site and would end Carter's chances for a second term. Much ink has been spilled over the mission but, to my knowledge, nothing has been written on the role of the U.S. Air Force Combat Control Team (CCT) at Desert One.[1]

Within days of the embassy's seizure, an ad hoc joint task force began forming at the Pentagon in the Special Operations Division under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. An Army officer, Maj. Gen. James Vaught, commanded the task force; his deputy, Air Force Col. James Kyle, possessed a wealth of experience in special operations C–130s. Among various plans considered was for an elite counterterrorist force, under Col. Charlie Beckwith, to enter the embassy and rescue the hostages. Navy RH–53D minesweeping helicopters were brought into the plan to provide airlift for both the counterterrorist ground force and the hostages. An Air Force CCT, led by Maj. John Carney, would provide air traffic control and remote Landing Zone navigational systems and lighting, and they would marshal the aircraft on the desert strip.[2]

The term "compartmentation," or the denying of information to those without a specific need-to-know, including participants in an operation, has been acknowledged in reference to the hostage rescue mission. Combat Controller Rex Wollmann's experience confirmed that aspect of the operation. In the winter of 1979-1980, Wollmann was a young staff sergeant assigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing's CCT at Hurlburt Field, Florida, when he received a call from Major Carney—whom he had never met—to bring a wet cell battery for a TACAN needed for an exercise at Yuma, Arizona. Wollmann recalled:

It was basically, hey, you're coming here. Bring this battery to help support us. I actually brought the wrong battery because I didn't understand him, but it worked out anyway… And that's when I started seeing everything kind of tying in together. Even though I wasn't briefed on what was going on…I think at that time I realized that this was for a bigger purpose than just training aircrew.

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Wollmann became a frequent participant in the exercises. Finally, while on the bus after one scenario he cornered Colonel Kyle, the JTF Deputy Commander and the Air Force component commander, and said, "I know what's going on…and if this thing's going to go, I want in!" Even then, Kyle remained noncommittal, and it was some time before Wollmann was designated a participant in the operation.[3]

A key factor concerning the lengthy five-and-a-half month period between the seizure of the embassy and the mounting of the rescue operation was that the JTF had to be ready to conduct the mission as best it could, if the Iranians were to start executing the hostages. That tended to give the JTF a short-term perspective on training. Furthermore, on several occasions diplomatic initiatives appeared close to bringing the hostages home. Each time, the JTF lowered its expectations that a rescue mission would actually be approved. Particularly that was the case when the task force was directed to stand-down over Christmas, taking two weeks off as during normal peacetime training. Combat Controller John Koren quoted another task force member who expressed insightfully, "We didn't have five months to get ready one time. We had one month to get ready five times."[4]

Between November 1979 and early April 1980, the JTF considered several rescue options. The final, approved plan was highly complicated and required some forty hours over two nights from start to finish. On Night One, six C–130s—three MC–130 Talons and three EC–130E's carrying fuel bladders—would fly from Masirah Island, Oman, into Iran and land at a semi-prepared site well southeast of Tehran. Eight Navy RH–53s piloted mostly by Marine aviators, would launch from the deck of the USS *Nimitz* and land at Desert One, as the site was known. There the helicopters would be refueled after which the C–130s would return to Masirah. The helos would then airlift Colonel Beckwith's ground force to a "hide site" about fifty miles from Tehran. There, American agents would meet the troopers and lead them on foot to a remote hilly area where they would hunker down for the day. Meanwhile, the helos would fly another fifty miles to a remote hideout where they would be camouflaged during the upcoming daylight hours. The JTF would monitor communications throughout the day to determine whether or not the rescue force had been detected. If all looked good, on Night Two, MC–130s and AC–130s would launch from Wadi Kena, Egypt, to secure the Iranian airfield at

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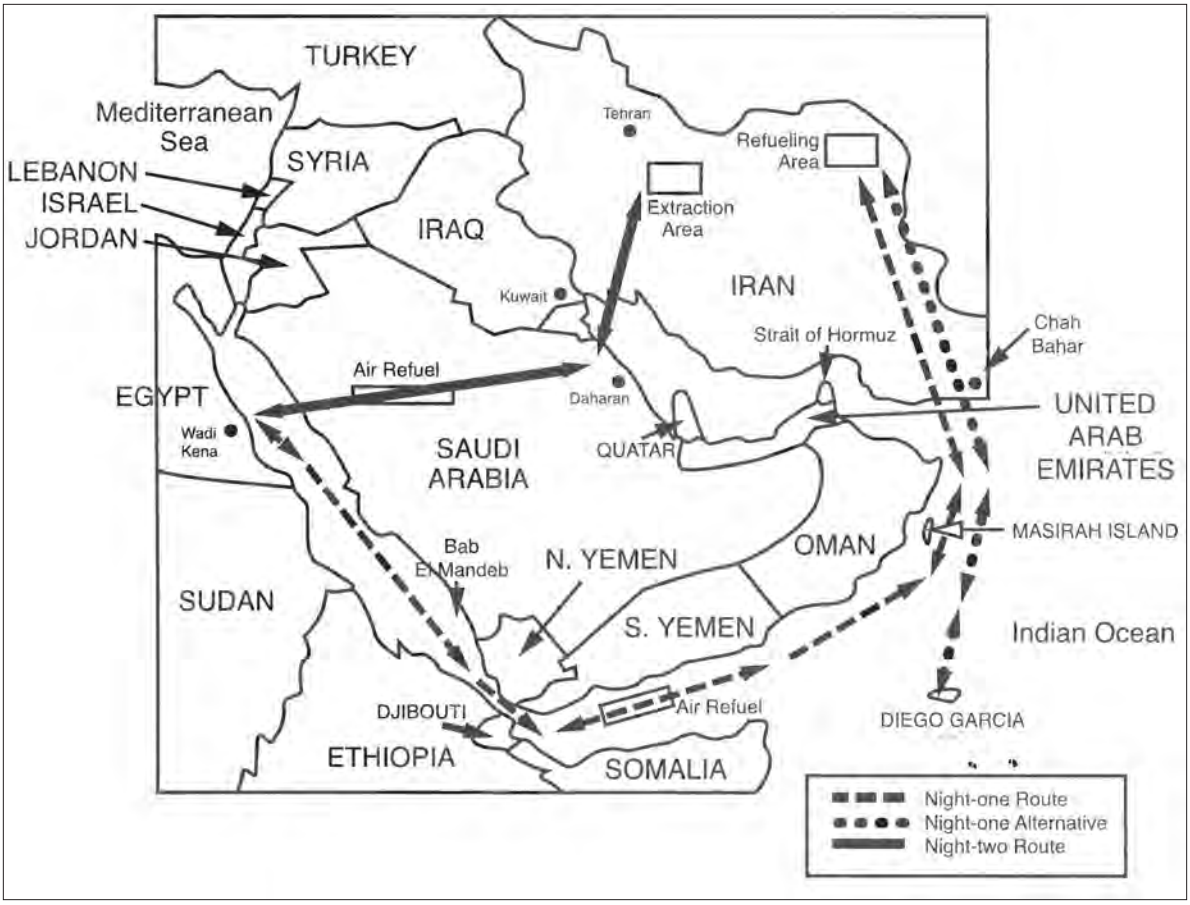
The first plan developed by JCS/Special Operations Division, November 16, 1979.



THE AGENTS WOULD LOAD BECKWITH'S MEN INTO SEVERAL VEHICLES AND DRIVE THEM INTO TEHRAN FOR THE EMBASSY ASSAULT

Manzariyeh south of the U.S. Embassy and to provide close air support in the Tehran vicinity. Next, two C–141s would fly into Manzariyeh to await the arrival of the rescuers and the hostages. The Starlifters were to evacuate all rescuers and hostages and provide medical care as needed. Meanwhile, the agents would load Beckwith's men into several vehicles and drive them into Tehran for the embassy assault. Once the attack had begun at Beckwith's signal, an AC–130 would appear overhead and the RH–53s would fly to the soccer stadium to receive the rescued hostages, bringing them to Manzariyeh. There, the H–53s would be abandoned and the hostages, ground force, and helo crews evacuated out of Iran on the C–141s.[5]

Six enlisted Combat Controllers plus Carney—known as "Coach"—would go into Iran. Marshaling duties on the North LZ, where three of the six C–130s and six of the eight RH–53s were expected to land, were the responsibility of Mike Lampe, John Koren, and Bud Gonzalez. On the South LZ, Dick West and Rex Wollmann would emplace the TACAN next to the dirt road and also marshal the other three C–130s and the remaining two helicopters. John Carney and Mitch Bryan would establish the control point collocated with the TACAN and handle the air traffic control duties from there. Colonel Kyle would position himself there as well. Two other Combat Controllers, Bill Sink and Doug Cohee, were to remain at Masirah in support of the JTF—and they were not at all happy about that![6]

Even when Carney's team arrived at Wadi Kena on April 20, 1980, operational details remained to be finalized. Prior to a covert reconnaissance mission early in the month in which Carney was flown into Desert One, all planning had been based on a single landing zone. On the reconnaissance mission flown in a CIA-piloted Twin Otter, Carney was given an hour on the ground to take soil samples and emplace CIA-developed, remotely activated lights in the traditional "box-and-one" pattern that would guide the first Talon to a safe landing. If caught by the Iranians, his cover story was that he was a geologist and had gotten lost. Returning safely with Iranian soil samples and without having to resort to any fabrication, Carney was certain that a dual runway operation was feasible, but there was no opportunity to practice this in the final rehearsal on April 11. The road next to where he had buried the LED lights would separate the two LZs, one to the north and one to the south. John Koren summarized the CCT's role at Desert One: "The biggest thing…was laying out runways, parking the aircraft [for refueling], and getting the TACAN up and running—which was a fairly heavy piece of equipment and emitted a lot of power." To assist in moving up and down the LZs, the team had acquired two Kawasaki motorcycles, and they spent part of their time at Wadi Kena practicing with the bikes. According to Colonel Kyle, John Carney was pretty good at keeping his Kawasaki upright even at high speeds across the desert![7]

MC–130E Combat Talon one, tail number #0572 deployed to Wadi Kena, Egypt and staged for night two of the Eagle Claw operation. Since Desert One this aircraft as shown has undergone numerous upgrades to include the paint scheme and ECM equipment.

EN ROUTE, BRENCI'S CREW ENCOUNTERED FIRST ONE, THEN ANOTHER LARGE AREA OF SUSPENDED DUST ASSOCIATED WITH DISTANT THUNDERSTORMS, KNOWN AS A "HABOOB"

Finally, the mission was a "go." Departing from Masirah Island at dusk on April 24, the Coach's seven-man CCT flew into Desert One on the lead Talon piloted by Bob Brenci. Two other Talons and three EC–130s followed, along with the eight RH–53 helicopters. En route, Brenci's crew encountered first one, then another large area of suspended dust associated with distant thunderstorms. Known as a "*haboob*," the condition had not been forecast and would prove extremely difficult for the helicopters to fly through. Four hours after takeoff, as Brenci's MC–130 neared Desert One, they had passed the haboobs. In fact, the night air was crystal clear and the weather perfect at the landing site. Undoubtedly, one of the tensest moments for the CCT was when Mitch Bryan activated the LED lights that John Carney had planted in the ground some three weeks earlier. Kyle described those moments:

We were now five miles from the desert landing zone…and Mitch flipped the switches that would activate the lights. Would they work? They'd been out there at the mercy of the elements for almost a month. All eyes were straining to catch a glimpse of them.…'There they are! Off to the right!' It was Carney. A cheer went up and John was on the receiving end of some good-natured back-slapping and kidding about his 'Flash Gordon' device.[8]

Within minutes of Brenci's landing on the South LZ, two unsettling interruptions took place. First, an Iranian tour bus happened to drive down the dirt road in the middle of the site. Such a possibility had been anticipated, but occurring as it did just at the start of ground operations must have tightened a few stomach muscles. Ground force members quickly stopped the bus and secured its terrified driver and forty-plus passengers. Rex Wollmann recalled he and Dick West were so intent on carrying the TACAN off the Talon's ramp that they didn't even see the bus until they were almost the only ones left standing there. "When we saw the bus," Wollmann said, "it was…oh, we shouldn't be doing this just yet." Only a few minutes later, a fuel truck followed by a small pickup came down the same road. Ground force members fired a warning shot that went unheeded. They then took out the truck with a light antitank weapon. The truck burst into flames—ruining the night vision of everyone in the area—but the driver managed to jump out and escape in the second vehicle. Colonel Kyle asked Charlie Beckwith what to make of the situation. Beckwith quipped, "Let's don't get excited until we get eight or ten vehicles in here and have to establish a parking lot." Shrewdly, he surmised that the fuel truck was part of a smuggling operation and that the driver would not be reporting anything to Iranian authorities. In any case, the driver had neither seen the Talon nor heard American voices. In the meantime, the CCT had set up the North LZ using basically a "compass and pacing" technique, turned on the lights, and was ready for the rest of the force to arrive. The mission continued.[9]

Assisting in the landing and parking of the aircraft under Desert One's conditions was no easy task. John Koren commented, "Once somebody landed we had to marshal them into their parking position because this was not a definable area.…We only had the box-and-one, [and] coupled with the obscuration with the dust and the sand, we had to…hand marshal…with our night vision marshaling wands." The controllers aimed for only twenty

C–130E tail number #1857, from Keesler AFB, Miss. was one of three ABCCC Airborne Command Post aircraft equipped with fuel bladders which landed at Desert One to refuel the helicopters.

TWO OF THE ORIGINAL EIGHT HELOS WOULD NOT MAKE IT TO DESERT ONE. ONE WAS ABANDONED IN THE DESERT WITH A BLADE WARNING LIGHT AND ANOTHER TURNED BACK TO THE USS NIMITZ WITH MULTIPLE INSTRUMENT AND NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM FAILURES

feet of separation between C–130 wingtips and the rotor sweep of the H–53s, largely because of the limited length of the EC–130s' fuel bladder hoses needed to refuel the helos. "And that's very close, at nighttime under [night vision goggles, or NVGs] in a dust environment in a combat zone," Koren added.[10]

Although Brenci's lead Talon had perhaps the most challenging landing, the nearest occurrence to a mishap *upon landing* may have involved Hal Lewis' EC–130. After Brenci's arrival on the South LZ, Marty Jubelt's Talon was the next to set down, landing on the North LZ. Three minutes later, Steve Fleming landed his MC–130 on the southern strip. Hal Lewis was next on the North side, piloting the first of the three refuelers. Working on the northern strip, Mike Lampe described the scene: "We're moving like molasses in January in the sand, with our rucksacks and our weapons…we've got a [motorcycle] that's pretty much useless to us in the soft sand, so…we're doing everything on foot." The sand slowed not only the CCT, it also slowed the ground force members as they off-loaded equipment from Jubelt's Talon. Lampe continued, "I kept looking at my watch, and I knew the landing sequence, I had that memorized.…So, I'm…realizing the next aircraft is supposed to land in this LZ and is probably just turning final." Failing in his attempts to contact Mitch Bryan who was handling air traffic control duties, Lampe finally decided to move Jubelt on his own. "I could see the guys…were still off-loading and so I finally made a decision and…got the aircraft's attention." Turning around with his marshaling wands, Lampe moved as quickly as he could to get Jubelt's aircraft away from the landing zone. As Jubelt's Talon turned out of the way, the next aircraft, Lewis', came right past him. The future chief and legend in the CCT community summed up the close-call: "I just made an independent decision to move that aircraft at that time based on knowing what the time sequence of the next landing was, and I'm glad I did."[11]

The last two EC–130s were piloted by Russ Tharp and Jerry Uttaro. Tharp's landing meant there were five C–130s on the ground. It was time to launch Brenci and Jubelt on their return flights to Masirah to make room for Uttaro and the inbound helos. As soon as the dust had settled from Tharp's touchdown, the Combat Control Team marshaled Brenci into position and launched him from the South LZ, followed by Jubelt on the North LZ. Uttaro's landing a few minutes later placed two EC–130s on the northern strip with one EC–130 and the remaining Talon on the south.[12]

Following the arrival of the –130s, Lampe, Koren, and Gonzalez established the standard "Y-lighting pattern" in preparation for the arrival of the helos. Two of the original eight helos would not make it to Desert One. One was abandoned in the desert with a blade warning light and another turned back to the USS *Nimitz* with multiple instrument and navigational system failures. That left six helicopters, the absolute minimum required to complete the mission. Arriving late, at different times and from different directions, the six remaining RH–53s had been separated under the harrowing conditions created by the unexpected haboobs. When the first helicopter finally came in, its rotor downwash kicked up sand and debris that knocked out one of Lampe's NVG lenses and one of Gonzalez's as well. The two had to work slowly and carefully, kind of hand in hand, to park the H–53. When all six had landed, four were positioned to

Members of the CCT (left to right) Mitch Bryan, John Koren, Mike Lampe, Bud Gonzalez, Dick West, John Carney (on the bike), Bill Sink (in sunglasses), Rex Wollmann, Doug Cohee.

LEWIS' EC–130 HAD BECOME SO LOW ON FUEL THAT HE NEEDED TO BE LAUNCHED IMMEDIATELY…BUT HELO-3 AND HELO-4 WERE PARKED BEHIND HIM AND LEWIS COULDN'T MOVE UNTIL THEY WERE OUT OF THE WAY

the north behind two of the EC–130s (Lewis, Uttaro), the remaining two to the south behind the third EC–130 (Tharp).[13]

The mission was still proceeding, although it was well behind schedule. Helo-2 had lost one of its hydraulics systems, thereby creating a serious flight control situation. When the aircraft was deemed unflyable, it reduced the helicopter force to five. Much earlier, it was assumed that *six* helos were required to complete the mission. The on-scene leadership quickly conferred and agreed they now faced an abort situation. They relayed their decision to the JTF Commander, Major General Vaught, and on to the White House. With a heavy heart, President Carter accepted the decision of his field commanders.[14]

Now the force faced a withdrawal from the Iranian desert, and at that point disaster struck. Hal Lewis' EC–130 had become so low on fuel that he needed to be launched immediately in order to make it back to Masirah. But Helo-3 and Helo-4 were parked behind him and Lewis couldn't move until they were out of the way. Directed to move but unable to ground taxi, Helo-3 picked up to a hover and encountered a brownout. Losing his orientation, the pilot drifted sideways into the left side of the EC–130, leading to a tremendous explosion and several casualties.[15]

…THE PILOT DRIFTED SIDEWAYS INTO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE EC–130, LEADING TO A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION AND SEVERAL CASUALTIES

Among environmental factors that challenged the CCT at Desert One: the darkness of a blacked-out NVG landing zone, temperatures around ninety degrees, and the bone-rattling noise of C–130 and H–53 engines that made communications extremely difficultthe ever-present dust seems to have been the worst. Rex Wollmann described it as powder-like, so fine that just walking through it created dust clouds. John Koren added, "It was very hot. We didn't have much of a crosswind, we had a lot of suspended dust…it was not a nice place." Given the dust situation that C–130 propellers and H–53 rotors only made worse, visibility was extremely limited. Mike Lampe and Bud Gonzalez, for whom visibility was reduced even further after each lost one of his NVG lenses, probably had less than fifty feet of visibility—and with only one eye.[16]

Some published accounts on Operation Eagle Claw have suggested the CCT erred to some degree in two specific actions in the desert. In *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War Against Terrorism*, the authors state that the pilot of the mishap helicopter, Major Schaefer, "lifted off and turned 10 degrees to the left, keeping his eyes fixed on the sergeant," that is, the CCT marshaler. Martin and Walcott continue, "But the sergeant backed away from the 100-mile-per-hour blast of Schaefer's rotors. What Schaefer thought was a stationary object was now moving." Thus, in *Best Laid Plans* readers would logically conclude that the marshaler was to some extent responsible for the mishap. The problem with this scenario is that as soon as the RH–53 lifted off, it was engulfed in the ever-present dust that plagued every movement of men and machines at the site that night. Even *if* the pilot had expected to be able to use his marshaler as a hover reference—which, recalling first-hand experience with H–53s from the 1980s, I would argue was a poor choice under any circumstances—he simply could not have kept "his eyes fixed on the sergeant" after lifting into a hover and thereby creating a dust storm with the powerful downwash of the H–53's rotors.[17]

The second action was the CCT's retrieval of the LED lights during the evacuation following the

Iranians view the wreckage at Desert One.

IF THE CCT WAS AT FAULT FOR NOT REALIZING THE HAZARD CREATED BY RETRIEVING THE RUNWAY LIGHTS, IT WAS A RESPONSIBILITY SHARED WITH OTHERS WHO DIRECTED THE RETRIEVAL

mishap. Those were the lights planted by John Carney three weeks prior to the operation on what became the South LZ. In an excellent and comprehensive work, *The Praetorian Starship: The Untold Story of the Combat Talon*, retired Air Force Col. Jerry L. Thigpen writes, "When the CCT removed the runway lights and replaced them with chem-lites, they did not realize that the pilots could not see the dimmer chem-lites that outlined the runway." As a result, when first Russ Tharp and then Steve Fleming started his takeoff run from the South LZ, each rammed his C–130 into a roughly three-foot-high sand berm marking the road, leading their passengers if not their crews to wonder if they would make it. Thigpen continues, "A catastrophe was avoided thanks to the durability of the tough C–130 aircraft and the superior flying skills of their crews." While Thigpen is correct, the reader is left with a wrong impression, one arguably unfair to the CCT. In *The Guts to Try*, retired Colonel Kyle writes that after locating John Carney in the aftermath of the explosion, he directed Carney, "Make sure you have all your runway lighting and navigation gear collected." Carney did so. Moreover, Bud Gonzalez recalled that prior to the mission the CIA had specifically requested that the LEDs be retrieved. It appears, therefore, that if the CCT was at fault for not realizing the hazard created by retrieving the runway lights, it was a responsibility shared with others who directed the retrieval.[18]

Perhaps ironically, the single CCT action that the Coach would have done differently has not been mentioned, to my knowledge, in any publication on the mission. In an interview, Colonel Carney stated, "The only thing I can think of is that nobody should have left that control point. And that's what I told combat controllers day-in and day-out after that. You don't leave the control point. You stay there and that's where everything is controlled from. Every decision that goes on at that airfield is made from that control point.…You never let that happen again." Carney was referring to the fact that he had allowed Mitch Bryan to leave the control point in an attempt to deal with a radio problem just prior to the decision to reposition Helo-3. Whether anything would have turned out differently, or course, is unknown.[19]

Several of the CCT experienced the helo/C–130 explosion from close quarters. Mike Lampe, who was positioned near Hal Lewis' tanker, described that as Helo-3 picked up in a hover behind Lewis, he turned his back to avoid the rotor downwash. The next thing Lampe remembered was the heat and "huge fireball from the explosion" that almost knocked him down. Lampe felt that the egress training the operators had practiced at places like Yuma, Arizona, and Indian Springs, Nevada, was to no small degree responsible for enabling them to get out of the burning C–130 as well as they did. Indeed, it was perhaps remarkable that under such conditions no operator or crewmember remained trapped inside the cargo compartment of Lewis' aircraft. Indeed, Lewis' radio operator, Joseph Beyers, was saved by two troopers who reentered the burning aircraft and pulled him out. Several others caught in the cargo section suffered burns but survived. But, tragically, five crewmembers trapped inside the EC–130's cabin perished, as did three of the crew of Helo-3.[20]

Following the explosion, the seven combat controllers performed a critical role in working with the C–130 loadmasters to distribute and upload the passengers on the remaining three C–130s and accounting for all personnel. Colonel Kyle was

(Top) Michael I. Lampe, Combat Control Team member who rose to chief master sergeant and went on to become the first Command Chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

(Above) MC–130E Combat Talon One, tail number #0565 departs Masirah Island, Oman as the lead aircraft for the Eagle Claw mission to Desert One.

adamant that after all that had gone wrong that night, he was not going to leave someone behind. Minutes later, Jerry Uttaro's EC–130 was the last aircraft to depart Desert One. Appropriately, the last two men to board were John Carney and Jim Kyle. In *The Guts to Try*, Kyle writes, "The C–130 crews and combat controllers had not failed in any part of the operation and had a right to be proud of what they had accomplished.…They had gotten the forces out of Iran to fight another day."[21]

Throughout the summer and fall of 1980, a much larger training exercise, known as Honey Badger, was practiced, should the need for a second rescue attempt arise. Fortunately, it was not required. Finally, on January 20, 1981, during the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, the Iranians released all the remaining American hostages.

Any discussion of the work of Coach Carney's CCT at Desert One would be incomplete without a few comments illustrating how Carney's men viewed him. One put it this way: "He's the only man I know that can walk into a room and everyone knew he was there, out of respect. I mean he's just charismatic, confident.…Natural kind of leader, good sense of humor. Sometimes from what I've heard, better than a good sense of humor!" Another felt that the Coach was "a True Leader who "commanded respect from all who came in contact with him…because of how he conducted himself." He continued, "There are those of us who would follow him into the flames." The Coach's CCT members were not alone in their view. The late U.S. Army General Wayne Downing, a former Commander of the 2d Ranger Battalion and, later, U.S. Special Operations Command, commented, "John's a gregarious Irishman; he could charm the pants off a snake…a good fellow, he could think big, good leadership, good vision, and was able to enact it."[22]

One of the seven Combat Controllers at Desert One, Dick West, is now deceased. Rex Wollmann, who worked side-by-side with West on that unforgettable night, said, "He was just like the rest of them, hard as woodpecker lips and very dedicated, motivated to do the job.…Of all the personalities there, I think he was probably the easiest to get along with." Two other team members noted, "He was solid as a rock, strong like a bull, selfless, and a class act." A third added, "Dick should be recognized as a participant of Desert One whose selfless action that night, along with his other CCT mates, averted a much bigger catastrophe."[23]

In the end, the events that unfolded in the Iranian desert on the night of April 24-25, 1980, left an indelible mark on the minds and hearts of all its participants. Sadly, the "miracle" that a dedicated team of Americans had somehow pulled off in February on the ice at the Winter Olympics in New York was not to be repeated in April in the desert of Iran. One CCT member recalled, "It was a national mission and we let the country down." Another said, "You had America's best out there, and it didn't work." And a third felt "a whole lot of disappointment" coupled with uncertainty over the fate of the hostages once the Iranians realized what had taken place.[24]

But Operation Eagle Claw held a "silver-lining" and served as a catalyst in two important respects. First, the event signaled the undeniable need to begin rebuilding the nation's special operations capabilities. This work began in October 1980 with the establishment of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Second, the loss of eight special operators that night—five Airmen and three Marines—and a ninth warrior, who remained incapacitated, left seventeen children in need of assistance with their education. In response, several special operators spearheaded an

initiative that today is known as the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, an entity providing college funding for the children of fallen SOF warriors. Because of his leadership, John Carney was chosen the Foundation's president and chief executive officer. Today, nearly twenty-nine years after Desert One, there have been more than 700 children of these warriors—nearly half since September 11, 2001[25]—to which the Foundation is committed to providing college tuition assistance. One hundred nineteen have already graduated and another 109 were in college during the spring 2008 term. Surely, a more worthy cause would be hard to find, and that itself represents a lasting tribute to those who gave their lives at Desert One.[26] ■

NOTES

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1. Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1985), pp. 76, 175; Paul B. Ryan, *The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why It Failed* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1985), pp. 6-12; William J. Daugherty, *In the Shadow of the Ayatollah: A CIA Hostage in Iran* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2001), p. 94; John T. Carney, Jr. and Benjamin F. Schemmer, *No Room For Error: The Covert Operations of America's Special Tactics Units from Iran to Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), Chapters 6 and 7; Charles G. Cogan, "Desert One and Its Disorders," *Journal of Military History* 67:1 (Jan. 2003), pp. 201-16.

2. James H. Kyle, *The Guts To Try: The Untold Story of the Iran Hostage Rescue Mission by the On-Scene Desert Commander* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Primer Publishers, 1995 [1990]), pp. 15-28.

3. Oral History Interview (OHI), CMSgt. Rex V. Wollmann USAF, (Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, May 24, 2007, Mary Esther, Fla., Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA hereafter); Kyle, *Guts to Try,* p. 196.

4. OHI, Maj. John A. Koren, USAF, (Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, Oct. 5, 2006, Maxwell AFB, Ala., AFHRA; Kyle, *Guts to Try,* pp. 117-18.

5. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 178-85.

6. Various interviews; email, Carney to author; Carney, *No Room For Error*, CCT photograph and caption (page unnumbered).

7. Koren interview; OHI, Col. John T. Carney, Jr., USAF, (Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, Nov. 7, 2006, Tampa, Fla., AFHRA; Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 143-45, 167-68, 172-74, 186-90, 206, 209-11, 219.

8. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 235, 246-49, 251, 256-57, quote on p. 257.

9. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 259-64; Wollmann, Koren interviews; Charlie A. Beckwith and Donald Knox, *Delta Force* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1983), pp. 269-70; OHI, CMSgt. Michael I. Lampe, USAF, (Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, Nov. 3, 2006, Ft. Rucker, Ala., and Jun. 5, 2007, Maxwell AFB, Ala., AFHRA. While Beckwith (*Delta Force*, p. 269) states he fired at the bus's tires, Kyle (*Guts To Try*, p. 259) says the driver stopped in response to warning shots. Though differing, the two accounts do not necessarily contradict one another.

10. Koren interview. Kyle mentions the rehearsal on Dec. 18, 1979, in which the need for better marshaling procedures was apparent (pp. 114-15).

11. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 273-74; Jerry L. Thigpen, *The Praetorian Starship: The Untold Story of the Combat Talon* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, Dec. 2001), pp. 222-23; Lampe interview.

12. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 272-75; Thigpen, *Praetorian Starship*, p. 223.

13. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 249-50, 268-71, 278-82; Thigpen, *Praetorian Starship*, pp. 223-26; Lampe interview. Note that at the time of the mishap, there were two EC–130s on the North LZ (Lewis, Uttaro); one EC–130 (Tharp) and one MC–130 (Fleming) on the South LZ.

14. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 176, 287-91; Thigpen, *Praetorian Starship*, pp. 224-25.

15. Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 294-99.

16. Wollmann, Koren, Lampe interviews; Beckwith, *Delta Force*, pp. 275-76. Wollmann estimated he carried 85 pounds of equipment, not counting the TACAN. Koren noted that CCT members wore aircraft-type headsets that were not noise-reducing and not very good. Kyle notes the temperature as being above 90 degrees (p. 289).

17. David C. Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War Against Terrorism* (Cambridge: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988), p. 24; for a more recent work that borrows the mishap description of Martin and Walcott, see Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), pp. 71-72; a different view is presented in Ryan, *Iranian Rescue Mission*, p. 87; Ryan quotes an eye-witness who stated, "The helo pilot could not see"; in an email, John Carney reported that Schaefer experienced "complete brownout." Referring to Schaefer's (Helo-3) planned movement, Kyle notes, "The controller was there as an observer, since this was basically a straight-ahead maneuver and once the dust was churned up he wouldn't be seen anyway" (p. 295).

18. Thigpen, *Praetorian Starship*, p. 228; Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 301, 305; OHI, Maj. Manuel L. "Bud" Gonzalez , USAF, (Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, Feb. 7, 2007, Hurlburt Field, Fla., and personal discussion at Hurlburt Field, Mar. 25, 2008, AFHRA.

19. Carney interview.

20. Lampe interview; Kyle, *Guts To Try*, pp. 294-99.

21. *Ibid*., pp. 301-5, quote on pg. 7. One interesting fact is that on the way out of Iran, the CCT's motorcycles were thrown out to lighten the aircraft. John Carney's 'dogtags' were attached to one of the motorcycle's keys, and so were lost (Lampe interview).

22. Wollmann interview; email, Bryan to author; OHI, Gen. Wayne A. Downing (USA, Ret.) with Forrest L. Marion, Mar. 19, 2007, Peoria Heights, Ill., AFHRA.

23. Wollmann interview; emails, Koren, Lampe, Gonzalez to author.

24. Koren, Wollmann interviews.

25. E-mails, CMSgt. Wayne G. Norrad, USAF, (Ret.) to author, Aug. 2007; *Warrior Link* (Special Operations Warrior Foundation, May 2008), 2.

26. *Ibid*.