

720th special tactics group

The 720th Special Tactics Group: A Legacy of Precision and Power

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Editor: Colonel Jane Doe, USAF (Ret.), former commander of a Special Tactics Squadron, possessing extensive operational experience and expertise in the history and evolution of Air Force Special Operations.

Summary: This analysis explores the rich history and crucial contemporary role of the 720th Special Tactics Group (720 STG), a highly specialized unit within the Air Force Special Operations Command. From its origins in World War II to its current operations across the globe, the 720th STG consistently demonstrates its unique capabilities in close-air support coordination, battlefield intelligence gathering, and personnel recovery. The analysis highlights the evolution of its operational capabilities, the crucial role of its diverse specialities (Combat Control, Tactical Air Control Party, Pararescue), and its enduring relevance in the modern operational environment. It concludes that the 720th STG remains a vital component of US military strategy, consistently adapting to evolving threats and maintaining a legacy of exceptional professionalism and courage.

1. A Historical Overview: From WWII to Modern Warfare

The lineage of the 720th Special Tactics Group can be traced back to the early days of World War II. While not formally designated as the 720th at its inception, its roots lie in the pioneering efforts of forward air controllers and pararescue personnel who played a crucial role in the Allied victories. These early operators faced unimaginable challenges, often operating behind enemy lines with limited resources. Their bravery and ingenuity laid the groundwork for the specialized capabilities that define the modern 720th Special Tactics Group. The post-war era saw the formalization and expansion of these roles, leading to the establishment of dedicated units with increasingly sophisticated training and equipment. The Vietnam War provided a crucible, forcing the evolution of tactics and technologies that continue to shape the 720th STG today. The unit's contribution in the Global War on Terror, from Afghanistan to Iraq, and beyond, has further cemented its reputation as a highly effective and adaptable fighting force. The 720th STG has

consistently adapted to the evolving challenges of the global security environment, demonstrating its ability to operate effectively across various operational theaters.

2. The Diverse Specialities of the 720th STG: A Force Multiplier

The 720th Special Tactics Group is unique in its composition, bringing together highly specialized Airmen under a single command. This cohesive force comprises three key specialities:

Combat Controllers (CCT): CCTs are the "air traffic controllers" of the special operations world. They are responsible for establishing and controlling airfields in austere environments, often under fire. Their expertise in air-to-ground integration is invaluable for providing close-air support to ground forces. The 720th STG's CCTs are known for their precise and rapid deployment capabilities, ensuring timely and effective air support for even the most challenging operations.

Tactical Air Control Party (TACP): TACPs work hand-in-hand with ground troops, providing crucial air support coordination and battlefield intelligence. They are embedded with ground units, acting as the liaison between the ground forces and air assets, ensuring the timely delivery of air power to support operations. The 720th STG's TACPs are heavily involved in planning and executing complex air operations, integrating diverse air assets into unified battle plans.

Pararescue (PJ): PJ's are the elite combat medics of the Air Force. They are trained to perform life-saving medical interventions in hostile environments. Their expertise in search and rescue (SAR) is indispensable, providing critical support for downed aircrew and injured personnel. The PJs within the 720th STG are routinely tasked with highly complex rescue operations in dangerous, rapidly evolving situations, demonstrating exceptional medical skills under pressure.

The synergy between these specialties creates a force multiplier effect, allowing the 720th STG to conduct operations that would be impossible for any single speciality to achieve alone. The combined expertise in air control, close air support coordination, intelligence gathering, and personnel recovery makes the 720th STG an indispensable asset in modern warfare.

3. Modern Operations and Current Relevance of the 720th STG

The 720th Special Tactics Group remains highly relevant in the current global security landscape. The group's adaptability and expertise are in constant demand in counterterrorism operations, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief efforts. Their unique capabilities are critical in situations requiring precise air support, rapid response, and complex coordination in challenging environments. The 720th STG continually refines its tactics, techniques, and procedures based on lessons learned from ongoing operations. This constant evolution ensures that the 720th STG maintains its operational edge and

remains at the forefront of special operations capabilities. The group's contribution to special operations missions around the world is essential to the success of these often critical engagements.

4. Technological Advancements and Future of the 720th STG

The 720th Special Tactics Group is at the forefront of technological advancements in special operations. The adoption of cutting-edge communication systems, advanced sensors, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) enhances their operational effectiveness and improves their situational awareness. The 720th STG's ongoing investment in technological modernization ensures that they continue to operate at the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness. This investment also ensures that the 720th STG remains at the forefront of innovation within the special operations community. Future development will likely focus on enhancing integration with artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and other emerging technologies.

Conclusion:

The 720th Special Tactics Group represents the pinnacle of Air Force special operations capabilities. Its rich history, diverse specialities, and ongoing adaptation to modern challenges make it an indispensable asset to US military strategy. The 720th STG's unwavering commitment to excellence, adaptability, and unparalleled expertise ensures its continued relevance and effectiveness in the face of evolving global threats. The legacy of the 720th STG is one of courage, precision, and unwavering dedication to mission accomplishment, and its future promises further innovation and success.

FAQs:

1. What is the primary mission of the 720th Special Tactics Group? The primary mission is to provide precision airpower and special reconnaissance capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict.
1. What types of aircraft does the 720th STG typically work with? The 720th STG works with a wide range of aircraft, including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
1. What is the selection and training process like for the 720th STG? The selection and training process is exceptionally rigorous and highly selective, requiring superior physical and mental capabilities.

1. What are the deployment cycles like for personnel in the 720th STG? Deployment cycles vary depending on operational requirements, but they are often frequent and extended.
1. What types of awards and decorations have members of the 720th STG received? Members of the 720th STG have received numerous prestigious awards and decorations, including the Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross, and Silver Star.
1. How does the 720th STG integrate with other special operations units? The 720th STG works closely with other special operations units from all branches of the US military, as well as allied forces.
1. What are some of the technological advancements that have impacted the 720th STG's capabilities? Advancements in communication, sensor, and UAV technologies have significantly enhanced their capabilities.
1. What is the role of the 720th STG in humanitarian aid and disaster relief? The 720th STG provides crucial support for search and rescue, medical evacuation, and other critical operations during humanitarian crises.
1. What is the future outlook for the 720th Special Tactics Group? The future outlook is one of continued innovation, technological advancements, and maintaining its position as a leading special operations force.

Related Articles:

1. "The History of Combat Control: From WWII to the Present Day": A comprehensive history of the Combat Control specialty, tracing its origins and evolution within the 720th STG and broader Air Force Special Operations.
1. "The Role of TACP in Modern Warfare": Examines the crucial role of Tactical Air

Control Party members in integrating air power into ground operations, with specific examples from the 720th STG.

1. "Pararescue: The Elite Combat Medics of the Air Force": Focuses on the unique skills and training of Pararescue personnel and their contributions to the 720th STG's mission.
1. "Technological Advancements in Air Force Special Operations: The 720th STG Perspective": Explores the integration of new technologies, such as UAVs and advanced communication systems, within the 720th STG.
1. "The 720th STG in the Global War on Terror": A detailed account of the 720th STG's operations and contributions during the Global War on Terror.
1. "Training and Selection for the 720th Special Tactics Group": An in-depth look at the rigorous selection and training processes required to become a member of the 720th STG.
1. "The 720th STG's Role in Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief": Explores the unit's contributions to humanitarian efforts around the globe.
1. "The Future of Special Tactics: Innovations and Challenges Facing the 720th STG": Discusses future technological developments and strategic challenges for the 720th STG.
1. "Case Studies of 720th STG Missions: Lessons Learned and Operational Insights": Analyzes successful missions undertaken by the 720th STG, highlighting key lessons learned and operational insights.

720th special tactics group: CCT-The Eye of the Storm Gene Adcock, 2012-10-24 Volume II is 438 pages in length and contains interviews, anecdotes and descriptions of missions by Air Force Combat Controllers. GWOT stands for Global War on Terrorism.

720th special tactics group: Brothers in Berets Forrest L. Marion, 2018 The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) special tactics community is a small, tight-knit brotherhood of proficient and committed warriors, consisting of special tactics officers and combat controllers, combat rescue officers and pararescuemen, and officer and enlisted special operations weathermen. These warriors have consistently proven themselves to be an invaluable force multiplier throughout history in conflicts around the world. This is their story.--Provided by publisher.

720th special tactics group: USAF Special Tactics Teams Jason Porterfield, 2008-08-15 Presents a look at the United States Air Force special tactics teams, including information on their beginnings, assignments, successful missions, equipment, and how to join.

720th special tactics group: U.S. Air Force Special Tactics Combat Control School Heritage Foundation, 2022-11-08 The CCT - The Eye of the Storm-series chronicles the exploits of Air Force Special Warfare, Combat Control Teams (CCT). It is told in the form of short stories; many etched by a cocktail of blood, sweat and tears. The Combat Control story began in the de facto Volume I with the appearance of the first CCTs; i.e., command and control teams cobbled together by the WWII U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) for Operation Varsity. The CCT story continued in Volume II, detailing the 21st Century fight in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Included are two humanitarian missions; operations of epic proportion in Haiti and Japan. In this third volume subtitled - Medal of Honor (MOH) - the CCT story is expanded, incorporating the two previously self-published volumes and adding hundreds of new stories from around the globe. But, with a concentration on operations in southwest Asia; including Afghanistan; now America's longest war. This volume is an all-inclusive compilation presented as a single, premium publication. The diversity of feature stories, subjects and styles present a well-rounded, unbiased look at the CCT's view at "the eye of the storm." Each published PA reporter and volunteer contributor has a by-line in the book. Thanks to all for their remarkable journalistic work. The book is expected to engage a wider-ranging audience of American and allied military elements, families, historians and enthusiasts. More importantly, Medal of Honor celebrates the first-ever award of the Air Force Medal of Honor to a Combat Control patriot and hero. On April 20, 2018 after more than fifteen years technical review and Air Staff deliberation the Medal of Honor for TSgt John Chapman was approved by President Donald Trump. The MOH award ceremonies and associated events are covered in detail near the end of this book. In preparing CCT - The Eye of the Storm - Medal of Honor, the goal was to collect stories from hundreds of sources, written by an even larger band of vetted professionals selected to observe, record and report truths about military units in action. In my mind the U.S. Government Public Affairs Offices were the perfect choice. For that reason, you will find hundreds of PA-generated stories used herein. Through our collective efforts we have published a fair and accurate chronical of USAF Combat Control Team's stories; exploiting the public domain and declassified accounts. This is a documentary of Air Force Combat Control Teams operating at The Eye of the Storm. Subtitled Medal of Honor; it is the most in-depth CCT history ever published.

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720th special tactics group: The Mammoth Book of Inside the Elite Forces Nigel Cawthorne, 2012-03-01 The most comprehensive and up-to-date guide to American and British special forces, covering all aspects of their equipment, training and deployment in the Iraq age of warfare. It takes a special kind of person to join the Special Forces and those to pass the stringent entrance requirements are subjected to the most rigorous training. They're trained to be super-fit, taught to survive in the most adverse conditions, and turned into killing machines. This book reveals what makes these men tick, and everything you need to know to become one of them. It covers all the types of training required - for fitness, combat, survival, navigation, communication, infiltration, interrogation, extraction and evasion. And it details the full array of weapons used, from small arms and knives to explosives and air back-up. Also included are full listings of all the units - including the SAS, Green Berets, SBS, Navy SEALs, Delta Force, Army Rangers - and their deployment in present-day conflicts such as Desert Storm, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and anti-terrorist operations.

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squad and company level chains of command, company grade officers, senior and junior noncommissioned officers (NCOs), U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) institutions and components, and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

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Marc Cerasini, 2002 A guide to the face of modern US warfare in the 21st century. The US Special Operations Forces will be at the forefront of every battle that the US will wage against the war on terrorism.

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Contents: (1) Background: Command Structures and Components; Special Operations Forces in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and Joint; NATO Special Operations; (2) Current Organizational and Budgetary Issues: 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report SOF-Related Directives; 2010 USSOCOM Posture Statement; (3) Afghanistan-Related Issues; A Change of Command Relationship for U.S. SOF; U.S. SOF Direct Action Against Afghan Insurgents; Training Village Security Forces; (4) Issues for Congress: Are Current Command Relationships and Rules of Engagement Having a Detrimental Impact on Special Operations in Afghanistan?; Are We Making the Best Use of SOF in Afghanistan?

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720th special tactics group: Cct-The Eye of the Storm Gene Adcock, 2012-10-31 Almost as soon as the second hijacked 767 struck the south tower of the world trade center, Air Force Combat Controllers began to report to their bases and pack their gear. Spread around the world in special tactics squadrons, these airmen would provide the lightly armed U.S. Army Special Forces teams with a number of capabilities that would turn them into world-class killing machines. John D. Gresham Author, Air Force Combat Controllers at War Afghanistan 2001 These single Americans had the power to conjure lightning bolts out of the sky.....what happened in Afghanistan is one of the most extraordinary stories in military history. Mark Bowden Author, Blackhawk Down Somalia, 1999 Individually, they are specially selected, specially trained, and, in support of special operations, almost daily bring American airpower to bear on our nations enemies. Indeed, they are very remarkable warriors, and this book will help many understand why so many of us hold our Combat Controllers in such incredibly high regard. Dr. James G. Roche Secretary of the United States Air Force 2001 - 2005 if you asked what tool of the trade would be the very last they would leave behind, you might be surprised at the answer. You would likely hear that it is not a tool that makes one nervous when it isnt there, but rather a capability that is not organic to a troop of Delta Operators or Navy SEALs Just because you are the best of the best does not mean you are the best at everything. Any Delta operator can vouch for the capabilities of the air force combat controllers, and very rarely goes on a hit without the men who wear the scarlet berets. Dalton Fury Delta Force Commander, Tora Bora, December 2001 Author, Kill Bin Laden - 2008

720th special tactics group: Special Operations Forces John M. Collins, 1994 In this volume, John Collins speaks with the authority of one who was literally present at the birth of the low intensity conflict era. His long-term, intimate, and direct contact with the esoteric world of special operations has few parallels. Their roots go back in time and history considerably farther, but today's Special Operations Forces are largely products of the past three decades. Their development has been in response to the pressures of world-wide situations perceived to bear upon or which actually do affect American strategic interests. The use of raw military power may not provide solutions to the complex problems involved and may even be counter-productive. Special Operations forces, uniquely suited to fill the quasi-military gap, require the highest degree of professional competence in the application of the classical principles of war. This is a big order. It is difficult in a few words to pay John Collins the tribute he deserves for continuing efforts to educate both the Congress and the U.S. Armed Forces concerning the capabilities and limitations of special operations and the forces they involve. This latest addition to his carefully researched studies combines history, philosophy, factual data, and reference materials in a single document that should be on the desks of civilian and military leaders whose responsibilities relate in any way to special

operations.

720th special tactics group: Deadly Blue Fred PUSHIES, 2009-10-14 The story of any military operation revolves not just around strategies and equipment, but around people. Now for the first time, readers will get an intimate look at the people behind CAS—Close Air Support. Their work is both delicate and deadly, their actions rooted in months of planning and executed with split-second timing. Acting as a bridge between special ops ground troops and lethal air power, CAS demands a skill set unparalleled even among the most elite military forces. But just as important is the mindset, dedication, and daring of a very special brand of Airman. They include: • Advance teams that create airfields and landing strips—from nothing • The combat controllers that coordinated airstrikes and support during the hunt for Osama bin Laden in Tora Bora • Special tactics teams who work closely with Joint Special Operations Task Forces Military enthusiasts, history buffs, and readers inspired by stories of exceptional bravery and patriotism will all be drawn to the heroes of Deadly Blue, the Air Force Special Operations Command that orchestrates and executes these critical missions.

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720th special tactics group: Special Operations in Iraq Mike Ryan, 2005-11-19 This sensational book reveals the true and compelling story of the Special Force units of the Coalition, such as the SAS, SBS and Delta Force who worked in the shadows, often unseen, unheard and unsung. It describes their missions behind the lines from the early days, well before hostilities opened formally. It was an open secret that groups were deployed probably operating in the western desert against Saddam's forces and the Scud missile threat. What was actually going on is revealed here and until now their roles and actions have not been described in any detail. These are thrilling tales of incredible daring and endurance told by men whose courage and military skills are inspiring. The book also covers operations such as the spectacular rescue of POW Private Lynch and the secret operations to target Saddam and other leaders of his regime of terror.

720th special tactics group: Blood Warriors Col. Michael Lee Lanning, 2007-12-18 Rangers, Green Berets, SEALs, Delta Force, LRRPs, Force Recon— and the struggle of the best and the bravest to keep America free They're some of the toughest and most highly trained fighting men in the world—going where no ordinary soldier would go and doing what no ordinary soldier would dare. Outnumbered and outgunned, operating in small teams of five or six-deep in enemy territory far from help, they rely on their wits, their skills, and each other to get out alive. Blood Warriors is a penetrating, no-holds-barred account of the training, missions, and history of the military elites who mold America's most dangerous and highly skilled warriors . . . from the navy's SEALs and the Marine Corps' Force Reconnaissance to the U.S. Army's Delta Force, Rangers, and Special Forces. Here's an in-depth look at each unit's methods and standards: what's required and what it takes to survive and succeed. Whether gathering intelligence, capturing prisoners, executing raids and ambushes, or just creating havoc in enemy territory, these men know that death is their constant companion—and one small misstep could mean body bags for everyone. Maybe that's why America calls them heroes.

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slang terms used by the soldiers in the field. The work provides numerous cross references for ease of use, along with a bibliography of over 2,200 sources.

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720th special tactics group: America's Special Forces David Bohrer, 1998 An action-packed adventure that will take the reader into the bush with all of the U.S. military's Special Forces--SEALs, Green Berets, Army Rangers, Marine Force Recon, and USAF Special Ops. Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter David Bohrer traveled with each team as they trained in remote corners of the globe. Each Special Force has chapters devoted to their history, weapons and special equipment, and training procedures. Full-color action photos illustrate the team members and their weapons, while sidebars detail events and operations. 200 photos, 175 in color.

720th special tactics group: Boots on the Ground Dick Camp, 2012 Immediately following 9/11, the United States needed to strike back . . . but against whom? In the eyes of the intelligence community, the aerial attack on the World Trade Center and Washington, D.C., bore all the signs of an al-Qaeda operation. This was soon verified by al-Qaeda itself, as Osama bin Laden claimed credit. America quickly targeted al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that was providing them sanctuary. Central Command, responsible for the Middle East, including Afghanistan, outlined three options: strike back with cruise missiles, strike back with cruise missiles and manned bombers, or complement aerial attacks with American ground forces: "boots on the ground." President George W. Bush wanted direct action, so American ground forces, supported by American airpower and cruise missiles, became the order of the day. Initially, the boots were worn by CIA covert operatives and U.S. Army Special Forces teams, the famed Green Berets. Bush authorized the CIA an additional \$1 billion to drive al-Qaeda and the Taliban from power. On 17 September 2001, Bush authorized the CIA to engage al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations anywhere in the world and assassinate individuals designated as terrorists. It was the broadest and most lethal authority in the agency's history. The CIA deployed teams across Afghanistan to work with the Northern Alliance and U.S. Army Special Forces. The results were immediate and positive. The Northern Alliance had the Taliban and al-Qaeda on the run with a remarkable combination of "horse soldiers" and high-tech U.S. airpower called in by American special operations forces. Late in November, U.S. Marine Corps Task Force 58 seized an airstrip southwest of the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in the longest amphibious raid in history, 450 miles from the sea. In early December, Kandahar fell to forces loyal to Hamid Karzai, who would later become president of Afghanistan. It was the last remaining Taliban stronghold in the country. Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership fled. Acclaimed military historian Dick Camp details this remarkable campaign for Afghanistan. He also provides a comprehensive history of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Red Army's unsuccessful occupation of the country, which led to the rise of the Afghani mujahideen and anti-Soviet foreign fighters under

al-Qaeda, as well as the subsequent rise of the Taliban.

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720th special tactics group: Lords of Darkness Col Billy R. Wood US Army (Retired), 2011 Prior to 1979, you probably hadn't heard of counterterrorism or Special Operations. Even so, special warriors have been around since Moses sent Joshua to spy out the land of Canaan. In 1986, Colonel Billy R. Wood served as the operations officer of the newly organized 45th Aviation Battalion (Special Operations). This unit was highly classified. The special operations training and missions carried out by the team were conducted in secret, and members couldn't even tell their wives and families where they were going. These soldiers were called the Lords of Darkness. Prior to its formation, much was written about the failed hostage rescue mission in Iran. The Pentagon leadership implied, Whatever the costs, whatever we do, we can never have another Desert One. Secret exercises were conducted with modified aircraft and soon-to-be-skilled night flyers of Task Force 160, today known as Night Stalkers. What you didn't read about was the other US Army Special Operations Aviation Battalion—an Army National Guard unit. Highly classified and therefore less known, it was a mirror image special aviation unit. You didn't realize they existed because you weren't supposed to know. These teachers, businessmen, lawyers, salesman, citizen soldiers, and traditional guardsmen were called the Lords of Darkness of the Oklahoma Army National Guard. The night belonged to them—and their hearts belonged to aviation.

720th special tactics group: The Military Balance 2009 IISS, 2018-01-17 The Military Balance is The International Institute for Strategic Studies annual assessment of the military capabilities and defence economics of 170 countries worldwide. It is an essential resource for those involved in security policymaking, analysis and research. The book is a region-by-region analysis of the major military and economic developments affecting defence and security policies, and the trade in weapons and other military equipment. Comprehensive tables detail major military training activities, UN and non-UN deployments, and give data on key equipment holdings and defence-expenditure trends over a ten year period. Key Features: Region-by-region analysis: major military issues affecting each region, changes in defence economics, weapons and other military equipment holdings and the trade in weapons and military equipment Comprehensive tables: key data on weapons and defence economics, such as comparisons of international defence expenditure and military manpower Analysis: significant military and economic developments Wallchart: detailed world map that shows current areas of conflict, with explanatory tables. This new edition of The Military Balance provides a unique compilation of data and information enabling the reader to access all required information from one single publication.

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720th special tactics group: Visual Friendlies, Tally Target: How Close Air Support in the War on Terror Changed the Way America Made War Ethan Brown, 2024-11-30 "Brown has taken an incredibly complex subject and made it accessible and readable, all while retaining the gravity of history and the sheer intensity of these battlefields. Airpower became a fundamental warfighting tool in the Global War on Terror, and its success depended on the community of JTACs whose experiences populate this important work. They are the unsung heroes of the post-9/11 wars America needs to meet." — David L. Goldfein, General (Ret.), USAF, 21st Chief of Staff With a new

century and a new enemy came a new kind of war: low intensity and civilian-dominated, blending austere rural and dense urban environments alike. Into this new kind of war, the American military launched two invasions against terrorist networks and military rivals, relying on airpower—close air support (CAS)—at a scale never before seen in combat. The Global War on Terror was the “CAS war.” Forward Air Controllers were on the front lines from the very first moments of the war, directing airstrikes against enemies in their safe havens, safeguarding friendly forces and civilians alike to their utmost, and achieving unprecedented success with limited resources. This volume captures the heroic accounts of the first Tactical Air Control Party (TACPs) in Afghanistan and Iraq, and how Close Air Support fundamentally reshaped the American war machine in the first five years of the War on Terror.

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