**Seal Team 6 United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group**

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| **Naval Special Warfare Development Group** | |
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| **Active** | November 1980 – present |
| **Country** | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |
| **Branch** | [United States Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) |
| **Type** | [Special Operations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Operations) |
| **Role** | Tier One [Special Operations Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Operations_Force) |
| **Size** | Classified |
| **Part of** | [United States Special Operations Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Special_Operations_Command) [Joint Special Operations Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Special_Operations_Command) [United States Naval Special Warfare Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Naval_Special_Warfare_Command) |
| **Garrison/HQ** | Dam Neck Annex, [Naval Air Station Oceana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Air_Station_Oceana), [Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia) |
| **Nickname** | DEVGRU, SEAL Team Six |
| **Engagements** | **SEAL Team Six**   * [Operation Urgent Fury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Urgent_Fury) * [TWA Flight 847 Hijacking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TWA_Flight_847) * [*Achille Lauro* Hijacking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MS_Achille_Lauro)   **DEVGRU**   * [Operation Just Cause](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Just_Cause) * [Operation Desert Storm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Desert_Storm) * [Operation Restore Hope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Restore_Hope) * [Operation Gothic Serpent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Gothic_Serpent) * [Manhunt for Serbian war criminals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SFOR)(PIFWC) * [Operation Enduring Freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001-present)) * [Operation Iraqi Freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Iraqi_Freedom) * [Maersk Alabama hijacking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maersk_Alabama_hijacking) * [Operation Neptune Spear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Neptune_Spear) |
| **Insignia** | |
| **Unit Shoulder Flash** |  |

The **United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group** (**NSWDG**), commonly known as ***DEVGRU*** and informally by its former name ***SEAL Team Six*** (***ST6***), is one of the United States' four secretive counter-terrorism and [Special Mission Units](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Mission_Unit) (SMUs).

The vast majority of information about DEVGRU is highly [classified](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security_classification), and details of its activities are not commented on by either the [White House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House) or the [Department of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Defense). While DEVGRU is administratively supported by the [Naval Special Warfare Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Naval_Special_Warfare_Command), it is operationally commanded by the [Joint Special Operations Command](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Special_Operations_Command). It is based at [Training Support Center Hampton Roads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Training_Support_Center_Hampton_Roads), [Virginia Beach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Beach), [Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia), known as FTC Dam Neck until 2004.

**History**

The origins of ST6 can be traced to the aftermath of [Operation Eagle Claw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Eagle_Claw), the failed 1980 attempt to rescue American hostages at the U.S. Embassy in [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran). During the [Iran hostage crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_hostage_crisis) in 1979, [Richard Marcinko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Marcinko) was one of two [U.S. Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Navy) representatives for a [Joint Chiefs of Staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Chiefs_of_Staff) task force known as the TAT (Terrorist Action Team). The purpose of the TAT was to develop a plan to free the American hostages held in Iran, which culminated in [Operation Eagle Claw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Eagle_Claw). In the wake of the operation's disaster at the Desert One base in Iran, the Navy saw the need for a full-time dedicated Counter-Terrorist Team, and tasked Marcinko with its design and development.

Marcinko was the first commanding officer of this new unit, which he named SEAL Team Six. At the time there were only two [United States Navy SEAL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy_SEAL) (**Se**a, **A**ir and **L**and) teams; Marcinko purportedly named the unit Team Six in order to confuse [Soviet intelligence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KGB) as to the number of [SEAL teams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy_SEALs#Navy_SEAL_Teams_and_structure). The men in the unit were hand-picked by Marcinko from across the U.S. Navy's Special Operations personnel. SEAL Team Six became known as the U.S. Navy's primary counter-terrorist unit. It has been compared to the U.S. Army's [Delta Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Force). Marcinko held the command of SEAL Team Six for three years, from 1980 to 1983, instead of the typical two-year command stint in the Navy at the time. SEAL Team Six was formally created in October 1980, and an intense, progressive work-up training program made the unit mission-ready six months later. The existing SEAL teams, including 12 platoons in SEAL Team One on the West Coast, had already begun counter-terrorism training; they formed a dedicated two-platoon group known as "MOB Six" *(Mobility Six)* in anticipation of a maritime scenario requiring a counter-terrorism response, and had begun training to that end. The main area that separates SEAL Team Six/DevGru from the other "regular" SEAL teams is its funding. The team was given a large amount of money and are able to buy the best weapons and equipment available.



[Richard Marcinko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Marcinko), founder of SEAL Team Six, and its first C.O.

In 1987, a new unit was formed, given the official title of "Naval Special Warfare Development Group" (abbreviated to *NAVSPECWARDEVGRU*, or *DEVGRU*) after SEAL Team Six was dissolved. Reasons for the disbanding are varied, but the name *SEAL Team Six* is often used in reference to DEVGRU because of their similarities as a maritime counter-terrorism unit.

**Renaming**

In a 2010 article, [Marc Ambinder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Ambinder) wrote that DEVGRU's designation had been changed by the Defense Department to a new name; the name itself was classified. 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (Delta Force), was renamed Army Compartmented Elements (ACE). Despite the official name changes, Team 6's original name remains widely recognized; [Disney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney) filed to trademark "SEAL Team 6" the day after the Bin Laden raid.

**Recruitment, selection, and training**

In the early stages of creating SEAL Team Six, Marcinko was given only six months to get ST6 up and running. This meant that there was a timing issue and Marcinko had little time to create a proper selection course, similar to that of Delta Force, and as a result hand-picked the first [plank owners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plankowner) of the unit after assessing their Navy records and interviewing each man. It has been said that Marcinko regretted not having enough time to set up a proper selection process and course. All applicants came from the [Underwater Demolition Teams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underwater_Demolition_Team) (UDTs) and East and West Coast SEAL teams. Marcinko's criteria for recruiting applicants was combat experience so he would know they could perform under fire; language skills were vital, as the unit would have a worldwide mandate to communicate with the local population if needed; union skills, to be able to blend in as civilians during an operation; and finally SEAL skills. Members of SEAL Team Six were selected in part because of the different specialist skills of each man.

The training schedule was intense. A former Team member claims that in one year SEAL Team Six fired more rounds of ammunition than the entire U.S. Marine Corps. The emphasis was on shooting skills, range firing, [close-quarters battle (CQB)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Close_quarters_combat), and stress shooting in a variety of conditions.

Information about the unit is mostly highly classified, so little information is available about recruitment and selection. What is known is that the selection and training for the unit has not changed dramatically since its creation. All applicants come from the "regular" SEAL teams and the Navy's [Explosive Ordnance Disposal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy_EOD) units, unless applying for support positions (there have been open advertisements on the web for support personnel).

It can be inferred from the quality of their pool of applicants that those considered are in peak physical condition, maintain an excellent reputation as operators within the Naval Special Warfare community, and have done operational deployments with a SEAL Team that provided invaluable experience. As a result, the candidate will usually be in his 30s. As ST6 was recruiting the best and brightest SEALs/UDTs from the regular teams, this created animosity between the unit and the "regular" teams, who considered that their best SEALs were being poached for the unit.

Candidates are interviewed by a review board to deem whether the candidate is suitable to undertake the selection phase. Those who pass the stringent recruitment and selection process will be selected to attend a six- to seven-month Operators Training Course. Candidates will screen with the unit's training wing known as "Green Team." The training course attrition rate is high; during one selection course, out of the original 20 candidates, 12 completed the course. All candidates are watched closely by DEVGRU instructors and evaluated on whether they are suitable to join the individual squadrons. Howard Wasdin, a former member of SEAL Team Six said in a recent interview that 16 applied for SEAL Team Six selection course and only two were accepted. Those who do not pass the selection phase are returned to their previous assignments and unlikely to be able to try again in the future.

Like all Special Operations Forces units that have an extremely intensive and high-risk training schedule, there can be serious injuries and deaths. SEAL Team Six/DEVGRU has lost several operators during training, including parachute accidents and close-quarters battle training accidents. It is presumed that the unit's assessment process for potential new recruits is different from what a SEAL operator experienced in his previous career, and much of the training tests the candidate's mental capacity rather than his physical condition, as he will have already completed [Basic Underwater Demolitions/SEAL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BUDS) training.

Candidates are put through a variety of advanced training courses led by civilian or military instructors. These can include free-climbing, advanced [unarmed combat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unarmed_combat) techniques, defensive and offensive driving, advanced diving, and [Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival,_Evasion,_Resistance_and_Escape) training. All candidates must perform at the top level during selection, and the unit instructors evaluate the candidate during the training process. Selected candidates are assigned to one of the Tactical Development and Evaluation Squadrons; the others are returned to their previous units. Unlike the other regular SEAL Teams, SEAL Team Six operators were able go to almost any of the best schools anywhere and train in whatever they wanted depending on the unit's requirements. In a recent interview, Howard Wasdin, a former member of SEAL Team Six said that he volunteered to be sent on a sniper course as SEAL Team Six required more snipers. He said that he could have chosen any sniper school available but personally chose the Marine [Scout Sniper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout_Sniper) School as he thought this was the best available in the world.

**Structure**

NSWDG is divided into four color-coded line squadrons: **Red Squadron** (Assault), **Blue Squadron** (Assault),**Gold Squadron** (Premier Squadron), **Gray Squadron** (Boat Crews) and a **Black Squadron** (Reconnaissance and Surveillance squadron). Each squadron is divided into three troops and troops are also divided into smaller teams.

**Commanding Officers**

* [Commander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commander_(United_States)) [Richard Marcinko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Marcinko) – Nov 1980 to July 1983
* [Captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_(United_States)) Robert A. Gormly – 1983 to 1986
* Captain Thomas E. Murphy – 1986 to 1987
* Captain Richard T.P. Woolard – 1987 to 1990
* Captain Ronald E. Yeaw – 1990 to 1992
* Captain Thomas G. Moser – 1992 to 1994
* [Admiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiral_(United_States)) [Eric T. Olson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_T._Olson) – 1994 to 1997
* [Vice Admiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_admiral_(United_States)) [Albert M. Calland III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Calland) – June 1997 to June 1999
* Vice Admiral [Joseph D. Kernan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_D._Kernan) – 1999 to 2002
* [Rear Admiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rear_admiral_(United_States)) Edward G. Winters, III – 2002 to 2004
* Captain Scott P. Moore – 2004 to 2006

**Roles and responsibilities**

When SEAL Team Six was first created it was devoted exclusively to counter-terrorism with a worldwide maritime responsibility; its objectives typically included targets such as ships, oil rigs, naval bases, or other civilian or military bases that were accessible from the sea or inland waterways.

On certain operations small teams from SEAL Team Six were tasked with covertly infiltrating international hot spots in order to carry out reconnaissance or security assessments of U.S. military bases and U.S. Embassies and give advice on improvements in order to prevent casualties in an event of a terrorist attack.

Although the unit was created as a maritime counter-terrorism unit, it has become a multi-functional Special Operations unit with multiple roles that include high-risk personnel/hostage extractions. Such operations include the failed rescue of [Linda Norgrove](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Linda_Norgrove), the successful rescue of an American businessman, and in 1991 the successful recovery of Haitian President [Jean-Bertrand Aristide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Bertrand_Aristide) and his family during a coup that deposed him.

After SEAL Team Six was disbanded and renamed, the official mission of the currently operating NSWDG is to test, evaluate, and develop technology and maritime, ground, and airborne tactics applicable to [Naval Special Warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Naval_Special_Warfare_Command) forces such as [Navy SEALs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy_SEALs); however, it is presumed this is only a small part of the group's work assignment.

DEVGRU's full mission is [classified](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classified_information) but is thought to include pre-emptive, pro-active counter-terrorist operations, [counter-proliferation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-proliferation) (efforts to prevent the spread of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction), as well as assassination or recovery of high-value targets (HVTs) from unfriendly nations. DEVGRU is one of only a handful of U.S. special mission units authorized to use pre-emptive actions against terrorists and their facilities.

DEVGRU and the [Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army)'s [Delta Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Force) (now called CAG: Combat Applications Group) train together and deploy together on counter-terrorist missions usually as part of a joint special operations task force (JSOTF).

The [CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency)'s highly secretive [Special Activities Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Activities_Division) (SAD) and more specifically its elite Special Operations Group (SOG) recruits operators from SEAL Team Six. Joint Navy SEALs and CIA operations go back to the famed [MACV-SOG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MACV-SOG) group during the [Vietnam War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War). This cooperation still exists today and is seen in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Operational deployments**

The majority of the operations assigned to the NSWDG are classified and may never be known to the public. However, there are some operations in which the unit has been involved where certain details have been made public.

**Grenada 1983**

Main article: [Invasion of Grenada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Grenada)

On March 13, 1979 the People's Revolutionary Army, led by [Maurice Bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Bishop), overthrew the newly-independent government of the small island of [Grenada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grenada) and established a new regime based on socialist principles. This brought it into continuing conflict with the United States, as the administration of U.S. President [Reagan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) considered the leftist government to be too closely allied to [Cuba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba) and the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union).

On October 12, 1983 a hard-line faction of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Government of Grenada, controlled by former Deputy Prime Minister [Bernard Coard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Coard), took control of the government from Bishop and placed him under house arrest. Within days, Bishop and many of his supporters were dead, and the nation had been placed under martial law. The severity of the violence, coupled with Coard's hard-line Marxism, caused deep concern among neighboring Caribbean nations, as well as in Washington, D.C. Adding to the U.S.' concern was the presence of nearly 1,000 American medical students in Grenada. On October 25, the United States invaded Grenada, an operation codenamed Operation Urgent Fury.

SEAL Team Six's Assault Group Three was to conduct a [static line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Static_line) drop with boats a few miles away from the Grenadian coast. One of two [C-130](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130) cargo planes transporting the SEALs to their drop point veered far off course. A rain squall accompanied by high winds broke out just before the SEALs conducted the drop. Four out of the eight SEALs that made the drop drowned and were never seen again. After the disastrous insertion, Assault Group Three was told to stand-by and began preparing for the next mission. The next mission was to go to the governor's mansion and secure [Governor-General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor-General) [Paul Scoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Scoon), protect him and his family and move them out of the combat area. A second mission was to capture and secure Grenada's only radio station so that it couldn't be used by the local military to incite the population or coordinate military actions. There was almost no intelligence for either of these operations.

**Governor-General's mansion**

To reach the governor-general's mansion, the SEALs were flown in on [Black Hawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_UH-60_Black_Hawk) helicopters that morning, and [fast-roped](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fast-roping) to the ground while under fire. As they approached from the back of the mansion, the team found Scoon hiding. The SEALs then continued to clear the rest of the house and began to set up a perimeter to ensure security. Soon the mansion started to take fire from men armed with [AK-47s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47) and [RPGs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocket-propelled_grenade). As the incoming fire started to increase, Governor-General Scoon and his family were moved to a safer location in the house. After the incoming fire had decreased, three men wearing Cuban uniforms approached the mansion, all of them carrying AK-47s. The SEALs shouted for the three men to stop where they were. When the three men heard the yells, they raised their weapons. The SEALs opened fire on the Cubans and killed them almost instantly.

Soon afterward, two [BTR-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-60)PBs rolled up to the mansion's gates. One of the BTRs at the mansion's front gate opened fire. Just as the SEALs were about to fire a [LAW](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M72_LAW) anti-tank rocket, the BTR backed off and left with the other BTR. When the SEALs had been inserted into the compound, they left behind their long-range [SATCOM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satcom_(satellite)) radio on a helicopter; the only communications the team had were through [MX-360](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Motorola_products#Portable_radios) radios. The team used the radios to communicate with a SEAL command post on the island to call in air strikes. As the radios' batteries started to fade, communications with the SEAL command post became weak. Once all the radios had died, when the SEALs urgently needed air support, they used a regular house phone to call [JSOC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JSOC), which was able to get an [AC-130 Specter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_AC-130) gunship to hold station over the SEAL’s position to provide air support.

When morning came, a group of [Force Recon Marines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Marine_Corps_Force_Reconnaissance) arrived to escort the SEALs, Governor-General Scoon, and his family to a point from where they were evacuated by helicopter.

**Radio station**



A Soviet-made [BTR-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-60)PB [armored personnel carrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armored_personnel_carrier)

Assault Group Three and another squad from SEAL Team Six flew to the radio station on a Black Hawk helicopter. The helicopter took small-arms fire on the insertion. Once the team unloaded, it overran the radio station compound. The SEALs were told to hold the station until Governor Scoon and a broadcast team could be brought in. After the team took control of the compound, it was not able to make radio contact with the SEAL command post. The SEALs set up a perimeter while they continued to try to make radio contact. As this was happening, a [BTR-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTR-60) [armored personnel carrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armored_personnel_carrier) arrived, and 20 Grenadian soldiers disguised as station workers got out. The soldiers carried weapons even in disguise. The SEALs ordered the soldiers to drop the weapons. The soldiers opened fire but were shot down almost instantly.

The SEALs continued trying to make radio contact, then another BTR and three trucks, carrying a dozen soldiers each, were spotted coming towards the station; the soldiers flanked the building and the BTR covered the front entrance with its [14.5 mm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/14.5x114mm) [KPV heavy machine gun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KPV_heavy_machine_gun). The incoming fire on the SEAL’s position was becoming devastatingly heavy, and they were running out of ammunition: the team knew that their only option was to change their original plan of holding the radio station, and instead destroy the radio transmitter, then head to the water following their pre-planned escape route out behind the station across a broad meadow that led to a path that cut between cliffs and a beach. The meadow was very exposed to Grenadian fire. The team [leapfrogged](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leapfrogging_(infantry)) across the exposed ground and took heavy fire, finally reaching the end of the field, cut through a [chain-link fence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chain-link_fencing), ran into dense brush, and followed the path to the beach. One SEAL had been wounded in the arm. The Grenadians were still in pursuit, so the SEALs waded into the water and began swimming parallel to the shore until they found cliff ledges in which to hide; once the Grenadians had given up the search they swam out to sea, where they were in the water for nearly six hours until a rescue plane spotted them and vectored a Russian Navy ship to pick them up.

**Somalia 1992–3**

During [Operation Restore Hope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Restore_Hope) and [Operation Gothic Serpent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Gothic_Serpent) in Somalia, DEVGRU was a part of [Task Force Ranger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Task_Force_Ranger). TF Ranger was made up of operators from [Delta Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Force), the [75th Ranger Regiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/75th_Ranger_Regiment_(United_States)), the [160th SOAR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160th_Special_Operations_Aviation_Regiment_(Airborne)), the [24th Special Tactics Squadron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24th_Special_Tactics_Squadron), and unknown number of SEALs from [DEVGRU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DEVGRU). [Eric T. Olson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_T._Olson), John Gay, Howard Wasdin, Homer Nearpass, and Richard Kaiser were the five SEALs that fought in the [Battle of the Black Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mogadishu_(1993)) during the last mission of Operation Gothic Serpent to capture the warlord [Mohamed Farrah Aidid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_Farrah_Aidid).

**NATO intervention in Bosnia, 1992–5**

During [NATO's intervention in the Bosnian War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_intervention_in_Bosnia), the NSWDG operated alongside other members of [NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO)'s [Implementation Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IFOR), such as its Army counterpart [Delta Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Force) and the British [SAS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Air_Service). These units were tasked with finding and apprehending persons indicted for war crimes (PIFWC) and returning them to [The Hague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hague) to stand trial. Some of DEVGRU's PIFWC operations included apprehending [Goran Jelisić](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goran_Jelisi%C4%87), Simo Zaric, Milan Simic, Miroslav Tadic, and [Radislav Krstić](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radislav_Krsti%C4%87).

**Afghanistan from 2001**

In Afghanistan during [Operation Enduring Freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001-present)) (OEF), [U.S. Special Operations forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_special_operations_forces) played a central role in the fighting. During the crucial [Battle of Takur Ghar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Takur_Ghar) part of [Operation Anaconda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Anaconda) a small team of [DEVGRU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DEVGRU) assigned to an [Advanced Force Operations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advanced_Force_Operations) task force were tasked with establishing observation positions (OPs) on the high ground above the proposed landing zones of U.S. conventional forces. It was one of the most violent battles of [Operation Anaconda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Anaconda). Late at night on March 2, 2002 a [MH-47 Chinook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_CH-47_Chinook) helicopter piloted by the [160th SOAR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160th_Special_Operations_Aviation_Regiment_(Airborne)) was carrying a team from DEVGRU. The original plan was that [DEVGRU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DEVGRU) would be inserted at a point 4,300 feet (1,300 m) east of the peak, but circumstances led the SEALs to choose the summit of Takur Ghar itself as the insertion point. As the helicopter was nearing its landing zone both the pilots and the men in the back observed fresh tracks in the snow, [goatskins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goatskin_(material)), and other signs of recent human activity. As the pilots and team discussed a mission abort, an RPG struck the side of the aircraft, wounding one crewman as machine gun bullets ripped through the [fuselage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuselage), cutting [hydraulic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydraulic_fluid) and oil lines. Fluid spewed about the ramp area of the helicopter. As the pilot struggled to get the helicopter away [Neil C. Roberts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_C._Roberts), a [DEVGRU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DEVGRU) SEAL in the ramp area of the aircraft, was hit and slipped on the oil as the helicopter took off. He fell approximately 5 to 10 feet (1.5 to 3.0 m) to the snowy ground below. Roberts immediately engaged enemy forces with his weapons including an [M249 light machine gun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M249_light_machine_gun), SIG Sauer 9mm pistol and grenades. He survived at least 30 minutes before he was shot and killed at close range.

**Killing of Osama bin Laden, Pakistan, May 2011**

Main article: [Death of Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Osama_bin_Laden)

On May 1–2, 2011 DEVGRU undertook the covert operation codenamed Operation Neptune Spear, under the [CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIA)'s authority, and killed [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden), leader of the terrorist organization [Al Qaeda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Qaeda), at his compound[34°11′15.3882″N 73°14′33.3954″E﻿ / ﻿34.187607833°N 73.242609833°E﻿ / 34.187607833; 73.242609833](http://toolserver.org/~geohack/geohack.php?pagename=United_States_Naval_Special_Warfare_Development_Group&params=34_11_15.3882_N_73_14_33.3954_E_) in the affluent [Islamabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamabad) suburb of [Abbottabad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbottabad), Pakistan. The attack itself lasted 38 minutes, and there were no casualties to the team. They had practiced the mission "on both American coasts" and in a segregated section of Camp Alpha at [Bagram Airfield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bagram_Airfield), Afghanistan in early April 2011, using a one-acre replica of bin Laden's compound. Modified [MH-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MH-60) helicopters from the [U.S. Army's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army) [160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160th_Special_Operations_Aviation_Regiment_(Airborne)) carried DEVGRU operators and paramilitary operatives from the CIA's [Special Activities Division](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Activities_Division). Other personnel supported with tactical signals, intelligence collectors, and navigators using highly classified [hyperspectral imagers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperspectral_imager) from [Ghazi Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarbela_Ghazi_Airbase) in Pakistan.



The raid was a CIA operation with DEVGRU being transferred under CIA authority for its duration. A May 1 memo from CIA Director [Leon Panetta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Panetta) thanked the [National Security Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Agency) and the [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Geospatial-Intelligence_Agency), whose mapping and pattern-recognition software was likely used to determine that there was "high probability" that Bin Laden lived in the compound. Members of these agencies were paired with JSOC units in forward-deployed fusion cells to "exploit and analyze" battlefield data instantly using [biometrics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biometrics), [facial recognition systems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facial_recognition_system), [voice print](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speaker_recognition) databases, and predictive models of insurgent behavior based on surveillance and computer-based pattern analysis. The operation was a result of years of intelligence work that included the capture of [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed) (KSM), the tracking of the courier to the Abbottabad compound by CIA paramilitary operatives, and the establishing of a CIA [safe house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safe_house) that provided critical ground intelligence. The raid force killed Bin Laden, an adult son, an unknown woman, and two couriers.

**Afghanistan helicopter crash, August 6, 2011**

15 members of DEVGRU's Gold Squadron were among the 38 killed on Saturday, August 6, 2011 in [Maidan Wardak province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maidan_Wardak_province), [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), when a [Chinook helicopter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinook_helicopter) flown by B Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, was shot down by a [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban)-fired [Rocket-propelled grenade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocket-propelled_grenade); the crash wiped out an entire troop of the squadron. The personnel killed in the helicopter crash are said to have belonged to an “immediate reaction force” that was en route to support [United States Army Rangers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army_Rangers) who were in contact under fire and pinned down on the ground. It was the largest single loss of U.S. life since the beginning of the 2001 [Afghan War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan), and is the largest single loss ever suffered by the SEAL community.

**See also**

* [List of Navy SEALs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Navy_SEALs)

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