

# SPECIAL TACTICS OFFICER & COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER APPLICATION—FY 2020



## Application Deadlines

Fall Assessment: 14 Aug 2019

Spring Assessment: 15 Jan 2020

Submit applications to: [24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil](mailto:24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil)

For general questions: [STO.Recruiter@us.af.mil](mailto:STO.Recruiter@us.af.mil) and

[CRO.Selection@us.af.mil](mailto:CRO.Selection@us.af.mil)

***“First There... That Others May Live”***

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## 1. **INTRODUCTION.**

Thank you for your interest in the Special Tactics Officer (STO) and Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career fields. This document outlines the application and assessment procedures for becoming a STO or CRO. For additional information, please e-mail both of the following:

STO – [STO.Recruiting@us.af.mil](mailto:STO.Recruiting@us.af.mil)

CRO – [CRO.Selection@us.af.mil](mailto:CRO.Selection@us.af.mil)

## 2. **CAREER FIELD ELIGIBILITY.**

STOs and CROs require high levels of physical fitness, mental agility, professionalism, leadership, interpersonal skills, initiative, psychological stability, motivation, and technical competency. Additional eligibility criteria are listed below:

- Male or females may apply
- Security clearance: Secret (minimum), Top Secret-attainable
- **Retention: Six years (STO and CRO trainees will incur six year active duty service commitment, upon completion of training pipeline)**
- Volunteer for Hazardous Duty: Parachute (Static-line and Freefall), Combat Diver (SCUBA) and mission aircrew (CRO only)
- Background: Outstanding resume and no negative personal history
- Medical/Physical: IFC III Flying Physical (SWIC), according to AFI 48-123
- Physical Fitness: At a minimum, candidates must satisfactorily complete the minimum scores on the PT Evaluation.

## 3. **APPLICATION PROCEDURES.**

Four assessments are conducted each year. Each assessment has two phases: Phase I and Phase II. In Phase I, a panel of career field experts review and stratify applications submitted by the deadline. The top applicants are invited to attend Phase II Selection. Phase II consists of a one-week evaluation conducted at Hurlburt Field, FL, approximately 60 days after Phase I. Candidates must attend Phase II in TDY status. AFSOC will fund Phase II attendance for candidates.

Upon completion of the Phase II evaluated events, the 24 SOW Commander makes his selection of new STO/CROs. Applicants will be briefed on their select/non-select status upon completing Phase II. The schedule for the two selection cycles is as follows:

Mid- January      Phase I applications due to ST Assessment Director (Phase II likely in March)

Mid - August      Phase I applications due to ST Assessment Director (Phase II likely in October)

Receiving an invitation to Phase II means the Phase I selection board would like to take a closer look at your potential to become a STO/CRO. Your decision to attend is voluntary and non-binding. Being selected at Phase II means the selection board president has approved your entry into the career field and pipeline training. It is ultimately up to you to accept the challenge.

**AFROTC/USAF Academy Cadets:** Cadets should submit a Phase I package before they are classified in another AFSC. ROTC cadets must have successfully completed Field Training before applying. USAFA cadets can apply in their Second Class year. Senior cadets are not prohibited from applying; however, these applications will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the Line Officer Accessions Program Manager at AFPC. In most cases, cadets will be allowed to attend Phase II on a contingent release from their assigned career field.

**Inter-service Transfers:** Officers in other services seeking to apply should reference AFI 36-2004 *Inter-service Transfer of Officer*. You should submit your application to the ST Phase I selection board before a service transfer is approved. However, you must include in your application a letter from your commander supporting this transfer. Selection at Phase II does not guarantee an approved inter-service transfer; the processes are independent of each other. It is highly recommended that this process be started at least six months in advance of Phase II due to the time required to complete a transfer. For additional information, contact the ST Assessment Director.

**Officer Training School:** Enlisted members who desire to attend OTS should first ensure they are eligible. This link outlines current requirements: <https://randolph.eis.aetc.af.mil/afrs/AFRSHQ/rso/RSOC/RSOCL/default.aspx>. Candidates will be required to clear AFRS/RSOC before being invited to attend Phase II. Upon selection from Phase II, you will submit an OTS package. Selection at Phase II doesn't guarantee acceptance into OTS- you must still meet the requirements outlined

by AF Recruiting Service (AFRS) to enter OTS and earn a commission.

**Active Duty USAF:** Applicant must notify their appropriate career field/functional manager of their intent to become a STO/CRO if selected from Phase II. The candidate must also receive an endorsement letter from their commander. If the applicant is invited to Phase II, but was not selected, the applicant will return to their previous assignment and career field.

**Civilians:** It is Air Force policy that civilian college graduates and civilian college seniors within 12 months of graduation from an accredited school will be eligible to be placed on active duty under the Battlefield Airman Sponsor Program (BASP) for the purpose of completing Phase II selection process if the civilian completes Phase I of the STO/CRO selection process. After successful completion of Phase II, the BASP participant will remain contracted in BASP and will attend Officer Training School (OTS) prior to beginning initial skills training. Individuals interested begin the process by contacting an active duty Air Force Special Operations Recruiter (SOR) in their local area. Civilian recruits must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Be between 18 and 39 years of age at the time of commissioning
- Possess a minimum 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale for all college-level studies, as well as their academic major, and be in good academic standing (i.e. not be on probation at time of enlistment)
- Attain a minimum score of 15 on the verbal and 10 on the quantitative sections of the AFOQT. No exceptions to policy will be entertained for scores that do not meet the minimum requirements.
- Provide, through his/her school, official transcripts of his/her completed course work. College seniors must provide an official letter from the school, certified by the university/college registrar, indicating courses taken by academic term, which verifies degree to be awarded and graduation to coincide with the BASP. College graduates must provide a copy of his/her college graduation degree and certified copy of official transcripts from the university/college registrar.
- Those selected at Phase II will have to complete Officer Training School (OTS) prior to beginning STO/CRO training. Phase II selection does not guarantee acceptance into OTS. The OTS application process is separate from Phase I and Phase II. The SOR and/or BASP Program Manager will provide the application, information and requirements needed at the conclusion of Phase II.
- Interested civilians should contact the BASP Program Manager @ [330RCS.OL-E.BASP@us.af.mil](mailto:330RCS.OL-E.BASP@us.af.mil) for further details.

**First-Time Non-Selects:** Candidates who attend Phase II but are not selected are not guaranteed a Phase II invitation in future selection cycles. If the cadre identify deficiencies/weaknesses that they would like to see corrected before accepting you into the ST or CRO community, you must submit an updated application that addresses those deficiencies.

#### 4. **PHASE I**

Phase I applications are due by the date posted on the top of each cycle's application. The ST Assessment Director conducts an initial review of the applications to ensure required information is included. The ST Assessment Director convenes a review board consisting of STOs/CROs. The board ranks the applications, identifying the candidates most likely to succeed. The 24<sup>th</sup> SOW commander has final authority to invite applicants. Once invitations are sent, the ST Assessment Director contacts the individuals with Phase II reporting instructions.

The ST Assessment Director designates the candidate team leader. At that time, the team is encouraged to begin team building via email and other means. The more cohesive the team is prior to arrival, the better the team interaction will be during Phase II, enhancing everyone's chances to be selected. The team leader is the primary means of contacting the ST Assessment Director for assessment-related matters. The ST Assessment Director is your definitive resource for all policy, continuity, and information on Phase II.

Applications from candidates are stored for Phase II cadre to gain an initial impression of the team members. All non-invited applicants may request feedback on their applications from the ST Assessment Director. If you do not hear from the ST Assessment Director within 45 days of submitting your application, contact them for details.

**Read through ANNEX A for complete instructions and guidance on constructing your Phase I package.**

#### 5. **PHASE II**

Phase II Selection is conducted at Hurlburt Field, FL. The purpose of Phase II is to assess each candidate in

the ST attributes for the purpose of determining if you have the raw skills to operate in the Special Operations environment. Your performance will be evaluated as a team member and as an individual. The schedule is designed to stress you. The cadre will observe and take notes on everything you do. These observations will be the basis for a hiring recommendation. The data will also be used to provide critical feedback to enhance your personal and professional growth.

Candidates must be prepared for a physically and mentally demanding week. You cannot trust your judgment of your physical and mental preparedness prior to coming to Phase II. Feedback from most candidates indicates that this week is more demanding than anything they anticipated. The cadre will push you physically and mentally beyond your comfort zone to assess those critical attributes in adverse situations. You will be expected to perform to the best of your ability in all events.

Billeting will be coordinated for all candidates. Candidates will be billeted together for the duration of Phase II. The candidate team leader is responsible for passing travel and contact information for all candidates. The first person to check in will be responsible for facilitating the in-processing of additional candidates. When the candidate team leader arrives, he or she must check in with the ST Assessment Director for further instructions.

There are five ways to be dismissed during Phase II:

- 1) Failure to meet minimum physical fitness standard; Member did not meet the minimum fitness standards required for entrance into STO/CRO and complete the assessment.
- 2) Medical DQ; disqualification based on recommendation of medical personnel or failure to complete a major event due to medical evaluation or treatment.
- 3) Quit by Action (QBA); Failure to Train (FTT) occurs when an instructor tells the candidate to train at an event or perform some action and he/she refuses. Three FTTs given by Cadre will result in elimination from assessment as QBA. When FTT is given, the candidate is pulled from training and provided individualized counseling to discuss the deficiency with the Cadre lead before returning to the training event.
- 4) Self-Initiated Elimination; defined as candidate verbalizing to the cadre "I quit," "I no longer want to be here," or any statement/action indicating that a candidate is unwilling to continue. Candidates will confirm their decision by verbalizing it to a Cadre member.
- 5) Committing any offense punishable under the UCMJ or violation or assessment policies demonstrating inability to uphold the standards of excellence required by the Air Force and the Department of Defense. This includes integrity and safety violations.

Candidates should be prepared for the following:

- Extensive psychological testing and interviews
- Briefing and writing skills evaluations
- Problem solving events
- Leadership ability evaluations
- Ruckmarches with 50 – 70 lbs of weight at distances up to 12 miles
- Running for distances up to 8 miles at a time
- Calisthenics sessions of various exercises
- Water confidence evaluations, to include:
  - o Under water swim intervals at 25 meters and 50 meters
  - o Mask and Snorkel recovery
  - o Buddy breathing
  - o Treading
  - o Drown proofing
  - o Surface swimming

**Note: Practicing sub surface water confidence is highly encouraged, but practicing without a swim buddy is dangerous and not condoned by Special Tactics.**

Those candidates who successfully complete Phase II and are selected can expect PCS orders to Hurlburt Field for STOs and Kirtland AFB for CROs. PCS timeframe will be coordinated with the losing command via AFPC. The ST Assessment Director will work with you throughout this process.

After you PCS, you will maintain a physical training regimen, and complete various in-house training between pipeline schools. This arrangement is designed to enhance your awareness of Special Tactics and Personnel Recovery missions, maintain your motivation, and foster professional development as a STO/CRO. After the Training Office schedules your pipeline sequence, you will enter the training pipeline; you will be returning to Hurlburt Field after each school.

# ANNEX A

## Phase I Application Instructions & Example

### **PHASE I APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Proof read your application for accuracy, format, grammar, and spelling. In Phase I, the selection board relies solely on information and impressions made through your application. Incomplete or poorly crafted applications are a reflection of the applicant's professionalism. As a general rule, successful Phase I applications are concise, easy to understand, and are not filled with extra "fluff." Your success in the ST community begins with this application.

#### **The application will include the following in this order:**

1. Cover page – Typed, using Times New Roman, black text, and Font size 10. Candidate signature must be hand signed.
2. Personal Narrative – One page in length (See example for format and specifics)  
**Note:** Candidates who have previously attended Phase II, but were not selected, must provide a statement on their identified problem areas and what have been done to improve their readiness.
3. One page résumé, emphasize leadership experience. (See example for format)  
**Note:** USAF military members must also include their SURF.
4. One signed recommendation letter from your commander, no more than one-page in length. The letter should comment on your leadership abilities including relevant examples.
5. Copies of the three most recent performance or training reports, cadet evaluations, etc. If your time in service is too short to have three reports, include what is available.
6. A signed statement from a medical authority documenting the medical facility and date of your most recent physical examination.

**Every effort** should be made to accomplish an IFC III Physical Examination prior to applying to Phase I. If this is not possible, include details of the type of examination administered. Include the name and contact information of the Flight Surgeon (or sister service equivalent) that accomplished the examination.

You may attend Phase II with an incomplete IFC III physical, however your selection at Phase II will be contingent upon its completion and certification. Do not include any portion of your medical records or any privileged medical information in your application. The Battlefield Airman Clinic (BFAC) will review your records electronically, if possible. If host base Force Health/Flight Medicine is unfamiliar with SWIC physical procedures, have them contact Hurlburt Field Battlefield Airman Clinic at DSN 579-3702 (Comm: 850-884-3702) for assistance.

When complete, your application should be scanned into a PDF file as ONE DOCUMENT, and sent via signed official email (.gov or .mil) to [24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil](mailto:24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil). Put your last name and "STO or CRO Application" in the subject line of the email, such as "Johnson-STO Application". For cadets that do not have access to official email, have an active duty leader send it in for you.

#### **Additional Notes:**

- The format on the next pages is not an option. Follow the example. Do not include the footer you see below that says: "Current as of DATE". Page numbers are not needed.
- If the header or section does not apply to your situation, delete that section.
- Be sure that all signature blocks are hand signed either by wet ink or a stylus.
- The top of the first page of the application should read "STO APPLICATION PACKAGE" or "CRO APPLICATION PACKAGE", whichever you are applying for.





MEMORANDUM FOR SPECIAL TACTICS ASSESSMENT BOARD

FROM: 1SOMXG/MXMG

SUBJECT: Personal Narrative

1. This document is provided to give the selection board an overall understanding of your character and personality. It should be clear, concise, and free of extra “fluff” statements. It should include your personal background, such as where you grew up, significant jobs/positions held, an explanation of your experiences and involvements before and during military service, an explanation of your perceived strengths and weaknesses, a discussion on what attracts you to become a Special Tactics Officer or Combat Rescue Officer, and why this is the right career for you.
2. The narrative will be formatted with 1 inch margins on the bottom, left, and right sides. The top margin will be between 1 inch and 1.5 inches depending on the heading you establish.
3. The heading format you see above should be followed with your own information entered in the FROM portion. The document may not exceed more than one page in length. Use Times New Roman with font size 12. Include a crest in the upper left hand corner of your header similar to an official memorandum for record. See AFH 33-337 *The Tongue and Quill* or sister service equivalent for examples of an Official Memorandum for Record.



JOHN A. DOE, 1st Lieutenant,  
USAF Logistics Training Flight  
Commander

## PERSONAL RESUME

John Doe  
1st Lt, USAF

SSAN: XXX-XX-XXXX  
DOB: XX DEC XX  
AGE: XX

### SERVICE HISTORY

Sept 14 – Present

*Logistics Training Flight Commander, 33LSS, Eglin AFB, FL. Leads 15 personnel in five function elements. Manages all logistics training programs. Ensures dissemination of higher headquarters training directives throughout the wing. Develops monthly training plans and schedules training events for 2,200 wing personnel. Monitors and directs the on-the-job training program for over 1,600 enlisted personnel. Provides monthly status of training briefing for all commanders. Maintains and controls over \$50M in training assets. Advisor to Wing Commander on issues.*

Jan 14 – May 14

*Cadet Squadron Commander, US Air Force Academy, supervised discipline, training, and safety of 104 cadets...*

**Cadets from USAFA and AFROTC should highlight any applicable leadership experiences or participation in any preparation programs in this section as well. Use Times New Roman and font size 10.**

### EDUCATION

B.S. Professional Aeronautics	Embry Riddle Aeronautical University	2010
A.A.S. Industrial Management	Northwest Florida State College	2010
A.A.S. Airway Science	Community College of the Air Force	2008

### PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (If applicable)

Non Commissioned Officer Academy	2010
Airman Leadership School	2007

### CERTIFICATION/AWARDS

USAFA Distinguished Graduate  
Army Air Airborne  
EMT Basic Certification  
PADI Open Water Diver Certification  
USAFA Superintendents List (Fall 08, Spring 09, Fall 10, Spring 10)

### PERSONAL INTERESTS

Fly Fishing, fitness, reading, skiing, rock climbing

Additional Parts of Application:

- Letter of Recommendation will be formatted according to AFH 33-337 *The Tongue and Quill* or sister service equivalent.
- Training reports for active duty members are already formatted using an Air Force form.
- Cadet training reports do not have a required format, but should be three separate documentations of available Field Training reports for AFROTC or CPR-II items for USAFA cadets.
- A signed statement documenting the medical facility and date of your most recent physical examination

## ANNEX B

### FITNESS ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

**General.** Applicants shall complete the physical training test in accordance with these procedures as part of the application. This test is based on the Special Tactics operator physical training standards/evaluation test described in AFI 13-219, *Special Tactics Operator Standards and Evaluation Program*. The added underwater swim portion of the PT Evaluation and the swim with or without fins is a modification for selection purposes only.

**Standards.** You must complete the minimum number of exercises, and run and swim within the times specified below. Selection is extremely competitive; you should give your very best effort, which should be well beyond the minimums. When you submit your application, your PT Eval should have been accomplished within three months of the Phase I due date, and as close to Phase I as possible to reflect your current level of fitness. The primary reason that candidates are removed for Fitness Assessment failure is due to training without proper form on calisthenics. Anything less than a perfect repetition will not be counted at Phase II and therefore should not be counted by your evaluator during Phase I fitness assessment.

CALISTHENICS: pull-ups, sit-ups, push-ups -- exercise to time limit or until muscle failure

- Minimums:
  - 12 pull-ups in 1 minute
  - 75 sit-ups in 2 minutes
  - 64 push-ups in 2 minutes

RUN: 3 miles non-stop

- Minimums:
  - 3 miles completed within 22 minutes (22:00)

UNDERWATER SWIM: swim and remain underwater for 25 meters

- Minimums:
  - Successful completion

SWIM: 1500 meters non-stop -- any stroke except backstroke (with or without fins)

- Minimums:
  - 1500 m completed within 32 minutes

Fitness Assessment Evaluation Criteria							
3 MILE RUN		CALISTHENICS (minutes)				1500 METER SWIM	
TIME (min:sec)	POINTS	PULL UP (1:00)	SIT UP (2:00)	PUSH UP (2:00)	POINTS	TIME (min:sec)	POINTS
20:00	200	16	95	80	100	24:00	200
20:30	190	15	90	76	90	26:00	190
21:00	180	14	85	72	80	28:00	180
21:30	170	13	80	68	75	30:00	170
22:00	160	12	75	64	70	32:00	160
22:30	150	11	70	60	65	33:00	150
23:00	140	10	65	56	60	33:30	140
23:30	130	9	60	52	55	34:00	130
24:00	120	8	55	48	50	34:30	120

**Administration.** The PT test must be given in the order listed and completed within a three-hour timeframe. If you are unable to meet any of the minimums, you have failed the test. The PT test should be administered by your supervisor, such as an ROTC instructor or USAFA AOC. Other test administrators will be considered on a case-by-case basis, following coordination with the ST Assessment Director. If you fail to execute the proper form, the test administrator will correct you, and the incorrect repetition will not be counted. The test administrator will document the results on the cover sheet of your application and sign in the appropriate space. Each candidate and administrator should watch the instructional video posted at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zdKD0VMKWg&feature=plcp&context=C3f31946UDOEgsToPDskJY7F3h01Zic0ZF9II5EPI1>. The video should be used as a guide for exercise form ONLY, the repetition and time standards referenced do not apply to officer candidates.

**Procedures.** Calisthenics events will be tested one right after the other with approximately a 2-minute time lapse between events. Upon completion of all the calisthenics events, a 10-minute rest period is given prior to starting the 3-mile run. Upon completion of the 3-mile run, a 20-minute rest period is given prior to starting the underwater swim. 10 minutes after the underwater swim, begin the 1500 meter swim.

- **Pull-ups (one minute time limit).** This exercise is executed on a pull-up bar. The individual grasps the bar with the hands about shoulder width apart. Hands must be facing away from the candidate (pull up). This is a two-count exercise. The exercise begins in the “dead hang” position. Count one: pull the body directly upward until the chin is over the bar. Count two: lower the body until the body is again in the “dead hang” position. Repeat as many times as possible. Individuals will not swing excessively or bicycle feet as the chin is pulled over the bar. Legs are allowed to bend, but must not be kicked or manipulated to aid upward movement. If the candidate falls off or releases the bar, the exercise is terminated. Designed to measure strength and endurance in the back, triceps, and biceps muscles used when performing specific mission tasks. A two-minute rest follows this event.
- **Sit-ups (two minute time limit).** Starting position: back flat on the ground, hands behind the head, fingers interlocked, head off the ground and knees bent at approximately a 90 degree angle. Another individual during the exercise holds the feet (optional). This is a two-count exercise. Count one: sit up until the back is vertical, breaking a 90 degree plane with the ground. Count two: return to the starting position. There is no authorized rest position during this exercise. If the candidate rests, the exercise is terminated. If an individual raises buttocks from ground, removes hands from behind the head during a repetition, or the fingers are not interlocked, the repetition is not counted. Designed to measure strength and endurance in abdominal and hip flexor muscle groups used when performing specific mission tasks. A two-minute rest follows this event.
- **Push-ups (two minute time limit).** This exercise starts from the front leaning rest position. The body must be maintained straight from head to heels with knees together. This is a two-count exercise. Count one: flex the elbows, lowering the body until the arm is bent at least 90 degrees at the elbow and the upper arm breaks a parallel plane with the ground. Count two: raise the body until the elbows are straight and locked. Repeat this exercise as many times as possible. The candidate will not raise his buttocks in the air, sag his middle to the ground, or raise any hand or foot from their starting position. If a hand or foot is raised, the exercise is terminated. The only authorized rest position is the starting position. Designed to measure strength and endurance of the chest and triceps muscles used when performing specific mission tasks. A two-minute rest follows this event.
- **Three Mile Run.** Performed with running shoes and running shorts. This run must be continuous (non-stop). If a candidate stops anytime during the run, the test will be stopped and considered a failure for the entire test. The test should be conducted on a measured running track. Designed to measure aerobic endurance used when performing mission tasks, specifically employment or evasion situations. This event is followed by a 20-minute rest period prior to the underwater swim.
- **Underwater Swim.** The 25-meter underwater swim should be demonstrated first either through actual demonstration or by use of training video already supplied to recruiting squadrons. If candidates surface or break the water surface during any portion of the swim, the test will be stopped and considered a failure for the entire test. Swimsuits and goggles are the only items allowed. Allow a 10-minute rest period prior to the 1500 meter swim. Candidates should carefully stretch for the swim during this break time.
- **1500 Meter Swim.** The swim will be performed with swim trunks and mask or goggles, with or without fins, in a lap pool. Ensure that you complete 1500 meters, not 1500 yards. This swim must be continuous (non-stop). If you stop anytime during the swim, the test will be stopped and considered a failure for the entire test. Designed to measure aerobic endurance in a maritime environment.