

19ZXA - SPECIAL TACTICS OFFICER APPLICATION—FY 26



Submit applications to: 24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil

Application Suspense:
26-01/15 August 2025
26-02/23 January 2026

Screener Dates:
20-24 October 2025
9-13 March 2026

“First There... That Others May Live”

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- Download this .pdf and open in a .pdf viewer to access the attachments on the attachments tab.

1. **INTRODUCTION.**

Thank you for your interest in the Special Tactics Officer (STO/19ZXA)) career field. This document briefly outlines the application and assessment procedures for becoming a STO.

For current applications, application deadlines, frequently ask questions (FAQs), updates, visit www.afspecwar.com. You should start by reading the FAQs after reading this document. For questions not covered in the FAQs, please e-mail the following: STO – 24SOWSTTS.Assessments.RAS@us.af.mil

2. **CAREER FIELD ELIGIBILITY.**

STOs require high levels of physical fitness, mental agility, professionalism, leadership, interpersonal skills, initiative, psychological stability, motivation, and technical competency. Additional eligibility criteria can be found at www.afspecwar.com in the STO FAQs section.

3. **APPLICATION PROCEDURES.**

Candidates interested must complete an application and are able to apply when all requirements are met. Applications will be reviewed and those approved will be scheduled for Phase II – AFSOC 19ZXA Assessment and Screener at Hurlburt Fld, Florida. Candidates must attend this assessment in TDY status and funding is provided.

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. Your decision to attend is voluntary and non-binding. Being selected at Phase II means the board president has approved your entry into the career field and pipeline training. It is ultimately up to you to accept the challenge.

Please see the FAQs @ www.afspecwar.com for information regarding Inter-service transfer (IST), Officer Training School (OTS), AFROTC, USAFA & Civilian applications.

4. **PHASE I**

Applications can be submitted at any time but all requirements must be met. NOTE: A full Special Warfare Physical is not required when applying but a thorough review of medical records will be conducted prior to candidates being allowed to attend Phase II. 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 AFSOC and 24 SOW senior leaders. The board ranks the applications, identifying the candidates most likely to succeed. The AFSOC STO Functional Manager has final authority to invite applicants. The names of those selected will be sent an official invitation memorandum outlining Phase II dates.

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

5. **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, along with those from psychologists and your peers, 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 to assess those critical attributes in adverse situations. You will be expected to perform and meet specific standards 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 the STO career field 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 of 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 5 miles at a time
- Calisthenics sessions of various exercises
- Water confidence evaluations, to include:
 - o Under water swim intervals at 25 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.

Those candidates who successfully complete Phase II and are selected can expect PCS orders to Hurlburt Field, Florida. 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 missions, maintain your motivation, and foster professional development as a STO. 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.
2. Fitness Test Scoresheet, reference Annex B and Attachment 1
3. Personal Narrative – One page in length (See example for format and specifics)
Note: Candidates who have previously attended Phase II or SW A&S, but were not selected, must provide a statement on their identified problem areas and what have been done to improve their readiness.
4. One page résumé, emphasize leadership experience. (See example for format)
Note: USAF military members must also include their SURF.
5. 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. Use integrity and DO NOT COPY AND PASTE information from recommendations of other people.
6. 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. * USAFA cadets must include a complete O-299 (w/comments and signed by AOC) and ROTC cadets will include Field Training Reports.
7. 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 a Special Warfare Physical (SWA) 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 physical, however your PCS to Hurlburt Fld or continuing in the pipeline 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. A flight surgeon in the 24th SOW will review your records electronically, if possible.

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. Put your last name and "STO 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".

STO APPLICATION PACKAGE

DATE: _____

Rank/Name: 1Lt John B. Doe

SSN: 123-45-6789

Work Address: 123 Main Street, Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

Email: john.doe@us.af.mil

Phone: 850-555-1234

Duty Title: Logistics Training Flight Commander

Branch of Service: USAF **AFSC/MOS:** 21A1

Commissioning Source: USAF Academy

Commissioning Date (Month / Year): May 2017

Cumulative GPA: 3.2 **Major:** B.S. Humanities

Attended Phase II/SW A&S/SOCOM Training: Yes / No **If yes, when:** (Month, Year) CRO, STO, TACP-O, SWOC, etc:

INSERT YOUR PHOTO HERE.

The photo should be an official forward facing portrait against a white background. You should be in service dress and the photo should extend from the bottom of your name tag/bottom of your ribbon rack to the top of your head.

If an official photo lab is not available, use a digital camera and stand against a white wall with nothing in the background.

Commander Name/Rank: Major John Smith
Email/Phone: john.smith@us.af.mil / 850-678-1234

Fitness Assessment Score: _____ **PT Test Date:** _____

Pull-ups ___ **Sit-ups** ___ **Push-ups** ___ **3 Mile run** ___ mins ___ secs

25 meter underwater swim (Pass / Fail) **1500 meter swim** ___ mins ___ secs

Administrator Name/Rank:

Contact (Email/Phone):

Candidate acknowledgment statement: "I, (Insert Name Here), hereby apply to become a Special Tactics Officer and volunteer to perform the hazardous duties inherent to Special Tactics. I also allow a review of my medical records to ensure I am able to meet the minimum requirements for the Special Warfare Physical. I acknowledge that I can be removed from further assessment for any of the following reasons: 1) quitting through words or actions, 2) becoming a medical or safety risk, 3) committing an integrity violation such as lying, cheating, or stealing, or 4) failing to meet specified fitness standards. I further acknowledge that upon graduation of training, I will incur a six-year active duty service commitment in accordance with AFI36-2107 *Active Duty Service Commitments*, Rule 25, Note 16. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is true."

Candidate Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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 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 20 – 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 17 – May 18

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 Officer physical training standards/evaluation test described in IFT Worksheet, Dated 1 Nov 21 (OPR: AETC/A3S).

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 SW A&S 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

- 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=C3f31946UDOEgsToPDskJY7F3h01Zie0ZF9II5EPII>. 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 candidate’s 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 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.