CONCLUSION:

The tactical demands of a Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) Operator require high levels of physical performance. These deployments, teams of Operators may be augmented by Combat Support Personnel (CSP), who specialize in mission-specific tasks. MARSOC Operators and CSP may also be deployed together in extreme combat environments; however, they do not go through the same tactical training. Operators during combat deployments are designed to optimize and maintain performance at a higher standard, similar to Special Operations teams. CSP, on the other hand, are soldiers with specialized training, ranging from intelligence to physical performance. CSP are needed to accompany Operators in extreme combat environments, often enduring the same physical demands; however, they do not go through the same tactical training. These findings suggest the need for CSP to incorporate additional training designed to increase their ability to successfully serve in the mission and member of their combat team. Future research is needed to examine the physiological and physical dichotomy between Operators and CSP and minimum necessary standards to achieve successful tactical performance.

METHODS:

A total of 42 Operators (Age: 28.5 ± 6.1 years, Height: 178.8 ± 6.7 cm, Mass: 85.4 ± 7.8 kg) and 19 CSP (Age: 28.0 ± 7.1 years, Height: 178.0 ± 6.0 cm, Mass: 81.4 ± 11.3 kg) participated. Subjects were recruited from Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Testing including body composition (%BF), anaerobic power (PAnP), anaerobic capacity (Vo2max), and knee and torso isokinetic strength testing (KF, KE, TF, TE) were collected on 42 Operators (Age: 28.4 ± 6.1 years, Height: 178.0 ± 6.7 cm, Mass: 85.4 ± 7.9 kg) and 19 CSP (Age: 28.0 ± 7.1 years, Height: 178.0 ± 6.0 cm, Mass: 81.4 ± 11.3 kg). Differences between groups were evaluated using independent samples t-tests, or Mann-Whitney U tests if required (p < 0.05).

RESULTS:

The purpose of this analysis was to examine the differences in physical and physiological characteristics between MARSOC Operators and CSP.

Physical and Physiological Comparison between Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command Operators and Combat Support Personnel

Operators CSP

Aerobic Capacity (W/Kg) 9.2 ± .9 8.0 ± 1.3
Anasteroic Capacity (W/Kg) 51.8 ± 4.4 47.7 ± 5.6
Left Knee Flexion (%BW) 135.4 ± 27.4 112.8 ± 28.9
Left Knee Extension (%BW) 132.3 ± 25.7 111.3 ± 29.1
Torso Flexion (%BW) 231.1 ± 35.0 198.1 ± 137.8
Torso Extension (%BW) 404.2 ± 101.8 355.3 ± 50.2

CONCLUSIONS:

At the current, we have identified significant differences in VO2max, anaerobic power and anaerobic power/capacity between Operators and CSP. These findings suggest the need for CSP to incorporate additional training designed to increase their ability to successfully serve in the mission and member of their combat team. Future research is needed to examine the physiological and physical dichotomy between Operators and CSP and minimum necessary standards to achieve successful tactical performance.