

Cobras

Oman

Cobras Oman has not suffered from a persistent terrorist threat since the mid-1970's. Nonetheless, as with many Middle Eastern states, the great potential for activity from non-domestic threats exists and must be dealt with. Oman's answer was the raising of an elite unit known formally as the Sultan's Special Forces (SSF). The SSF was created after the end of the rebellion in Oman which lasted from 1962 to 1975. The Sultan of Oman had not presaged such an event occurring in his country and was thus caught unprepared when violence broke out. Pro-Communist guerrillas under the banner of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) conducted a well-executed campaign that eventually occupied the entire Dhofar region. Fortunately, the Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said had a strong relationship with the British government and London dispatched Special Air Services troopers to the conflict. After scores of anti-guerrilla operations, some of which have become legendary in SAS history, the Omani government declared victory. After this conflict, the Sultan of Oman resolved that his country would no longer be without an effective force that could provide a sufficient deterrent against such an event occurring in the future. As luck would have it, the British SAS were willing to assist in this venture, and were instrumental in creating the new SSF. The SSF is based in Dhofar, in southern Oman. Reports indicate that the majority of new recruits are drawn from the indigenous peoples living in the mountains not far from the SSF headquarters. And so it comes as little surprise that the SSF is organized into combat (Sabre) squadrons and troops. As with the SAS, one squadron, the "Cobras", of the SSF is tasked with the counterterrorism role. The Cobras have established a reputation throughout the Persian Gulf region as a highly capable CT force. The Sultan has spared no expense with this group and they are, like the rest of the SSF, equipped with the best equipment available. As such, they are sometimes called on to assist neighbor states such as Kuwait and others who have not yet established effective response teams. Recruits must have previously served at least two years in the Special Forces. From here they are sent to a six-week selection and training course. There are two active teams within the Cobras, with a smaller training troop. All Cobra teams are on ready alert status and are expected to be able to respond to a crisis within 15 minutes. The Cobra teams are split into two groups, one based in Muscat and another in Dhofar, in the south of Oman. The Dhofar based unit is reportedly on 3 hour ready status, meaning all members are expected to be at the staging area, armed and ready to move out within 3 hours of receiving notice. The Cobras actively seek advice on equipment and tactics from established CT units such as Britain's 22 SAS and Germany's GSG-9. Oddly, the Cobras are seconded to the Royal Oman Police. While the police are certainly not as capable a force, they do have jurisdictional precedence in such matters, unless personally ordered by the Sultan. This conflict is further degraded by reported interservice rivalry between the two groups.