

Stopping the *Radio Nacional* Broadcasts

C/3-7th SFG
Ends pro-Noriega
Radio Broadcasts
during Operation
JUST CAUSE

by Robert D. Seals





Abstract: Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (SFG) stopped the Panamanian Radio Nacional pro-Noriega messages on D-Day of Operation JUST CAUSE. Well-trained SF and Army Special Operations Aviation (SOA) personnel using validated standing operating procedures (SOPs), and rehearsals enabled the company to quickly adapt and stop the local propaganda broadcasts.

The initial hours of Operation JUST CAUSE were a major disappointment for Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (3-7th SFG) on 20 December 1989. Stationed in Panama, the company had planned and rehearsed Direct Action (DA) missions for months in support of the anticipated United States combat action to topple the dictatorship of General Manuel Noriega. High profile missions, which included protecting friendly High Value Targets (HVT), like the “true winners of the May 1989 presidential election,” were cancelled, or assigned to other units before JUST CAUSE commenced.¹

These disappointments faded about 1530 hours, when Staff Sergeant (SSG) Deams B. Smith, an “extremely frustrated” SF Weapons Sergeant fluent in Spanish, turned on his transistor radio. He heard a Panamanian government spokesman urging locals to “resist the Yankee invaders, by grabbing a kitchen knife and fighting.”² Smith realized that these *Radio Nacional* broadcasts had to be stopped. Company C received that mission. It was characterized by surprise, speed, and aggressive force. This article describes how Company C, 3-7th SFG took *Radio Nacional* ‘off the air.’ That combat mission “validated the force” on D-day of JUST CAUSE.³

In 1989, the 3rd Battalion, 7th SF Group (SFG) consisted of three companies. Company C was assigned sensitive activities and missions. They had designated special operations teams (SOTs) and Regional Survey Teams (RSTs).⁴ Like a typical SF company, it had a Headquarters and six SF Operational Detachments-Alpha (ODAs). Major (MAJ) David E. McCracken, the commander, had served in the company as a SOT Assault Team Leader, as a captain (CPT).⁵

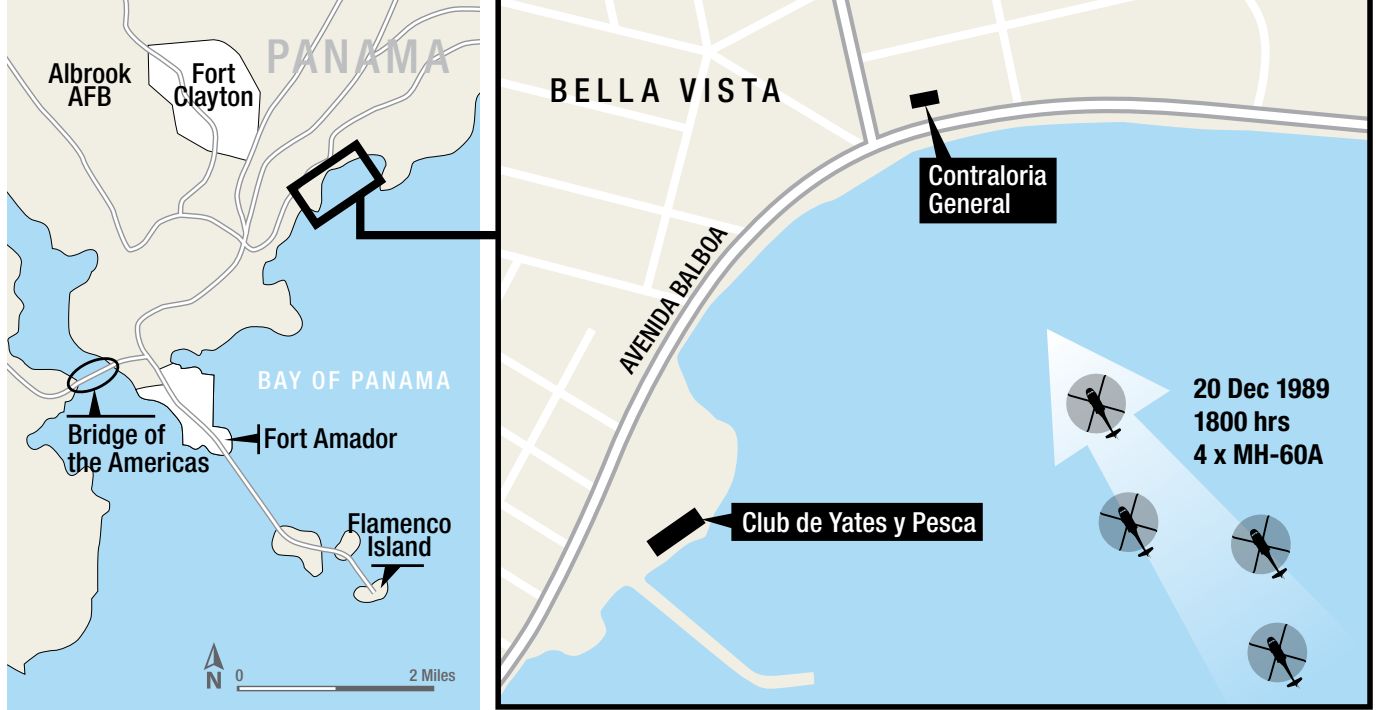
It was a busy year for Company C with training exercises in Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay, Honduras, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, as well as rehearsing for combat target seizures in Panama. Most rehearsals were ‘full mission profile,’ using rotary wing (RW) aircraft to assault targets, and fast roping onto a building or into dense jungle. The objective had to be cleared top to bottom, and often entailed capturing or destroying equipment or personnel. Then they were extracted by helicopter. Precise time on target (TOT) and constant communications during rehearsals were critical. Training was challenging and dangerous. Two soldiers were injured, one seriously, during the 1989 rehearsals.⁶

However, the rehearsals paid off. Company C and the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment (SOAD), with its MH-60A *Black Hawk* helicopters based at Howard Air Force Base (AFB), developed a habitual relationship. Practicing “multiple target arrays” at night ‘ratcheted down’ mission planning time and hardened SOPs. For example, everyone knew that the fast ropes would be ‘cut away’ by the aircrew after the ground forces were inserted, according to McCracken. A 617th SOAD aviation planner was attached to the company headquarters for operations requiring a Forward Staging Base (FSB).⁷ The special operations air and ground elements were finely tuned.

SSG Smith, the ODA 793 SF Weapons Sergeant, knew that the *Radio Nacional* pro-Noriega broadcasts fifteen hours after the invasion of Panama had to be stopped. Sergeant First Class (SFC) Thomas W. Sheridan, an RST Medical Sergeant, grabbed a Panama City telephone book to get the address for *Radio Nacional* offices, as special operations commanders in Hangar 450 at Albrook Air Station came up with a concept of the operation.⁸

Colonel (COL) Robert C. Jacobelly, the Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH) and Task Force (TF) BLACK commander, his staff, and 3-7th

Previous Page: ODA 793, SOT detachment, C/3/7th SFG. The company consisted of a Headquarters, four SOT and one consolidated RST ODAs. Standing, Left-to-Right: SFC Gary V. Jones, CPT Robert G. Louis, SSG Hector L. Ramos, SSG John M. Heisse. Kneeling, Left-to-Right: SGT Mark A. Ross, SSG Deams B. Smith, and SSG Jeffery A. Lett.



C/3-7th SFG operated from Albrook AFB in Panama during Operation JUST CAUSE, a short helicopter lift to the Contraloría General building in Panama City.

SFG headquarters were co-located with Company C in Hangar 450. At 1600 hours, COL Jacobelly directed the take down of *Radio Nacional* from the *Contraloría General* building to ‘stop the broadcasts.’ Intelligence was very limited. SFC Richard C. Lamb, ODA 795 Weapons Sergeant, remembers that “we did not have much to go on...the *Contraloría* was an office building in downtown [Panama City] and didn’t appear on any target decks that we were tracking.”⁹ There was possibly six-to-seven ‘Dignity Battalion’ personnel armed with AK-47 assault rifles on site. The fact that Noriega was still ‘at large’ raised the possibility that the highest value Panamanian target might be in the ‘twelve-story’ building protected by security forces.¹⁰

MAJ McCracken selected Captain (CPT) Robert G. Louis, ODA 793, to lead the nineteen-man assault element, consisting of five teams. CPT Douglas E. Walker, ODA 794, would lead the four-man assault demolitions team, while CPT Stephen T. Boston, the Executive Officer (XO) ODB790, had the eleven-man security element. For command and control there was a three-man assault command post (CP) on the target with MAJ McCracken.¹¹ The mission, according to Louis, was to “Gain access to the *Radio Nacional* building, move to the seventh floor, stop the broadcast, [and] take Noriega into custody.”¹² All ODAs from the company (791, 792, 794, 795, and 796) contributed personnel to the thirty-three man force.¹³

Equipment inspections, execution discussions, and mission review were conducted in the Albrook hangar. The phone book had *Radio Nacional de Panama* on the seventh floor, of the *Contraloría General* building on Balboa Avenue, Bella Vista neighborhood, overlooking

the Bay of Panama. At 1700 hours, the RST took photos of the target during a reconnaissance flight. “At this point...it was almost rote” for CPT Louis. Leaders familiarized themselves with key points on a map of the city, reviewed responsibilities, rechecked aircraft loads and flight routes with 617th SOAD planners, and listened to ‘brief backs’ by the teams. Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) Benny L. Wyrick, ODA 792, assault element, felt the “focus was to insure everyone understood their part.”¹⁴

Individual soldiers checked weapons, ammunition, confirmed radio frequencies and call signs, night vision goggles, and prepared demolitions charges. Different charges were needed to breach door-locks, door hinges, antennas, and radio components. White tape on the hangar floor outlined the roof and offices, and rehearsals began. Weapons had been test-fired days prior. Back from their aerial reconnaissance, the RST developed and provided a black and white photo prints. CPT Louis recalled that “the aircrew made suggestions on...our insertion and briefed...their approach to the target.”¹⁵

COL Jacobelly approved the DA mission as briefed. The commanders knew the plan involved fast roping onto a two hundred-foot tall high-rise building, in fading light, with ocean breezes, and aircraft drift that could affect their men’s descent. “They had put us onto varying type sites for several months, so no one hesitated to fast rope,” said McCracken.¹⁶

From alert to mission approval, two hours had elapsed. As the sun set, the ground force boarded the 617th MH-60A helicopters at Albrook. As CPT Louis got on board, he was surprised to learn that the building was seventeen floors, not twelve, according to the AST

photos. Louis relayed this last-minute update to everyone via the internal secure MX-300 Motorola 'brick' radios. Hopefully, all got the update.¹⁷

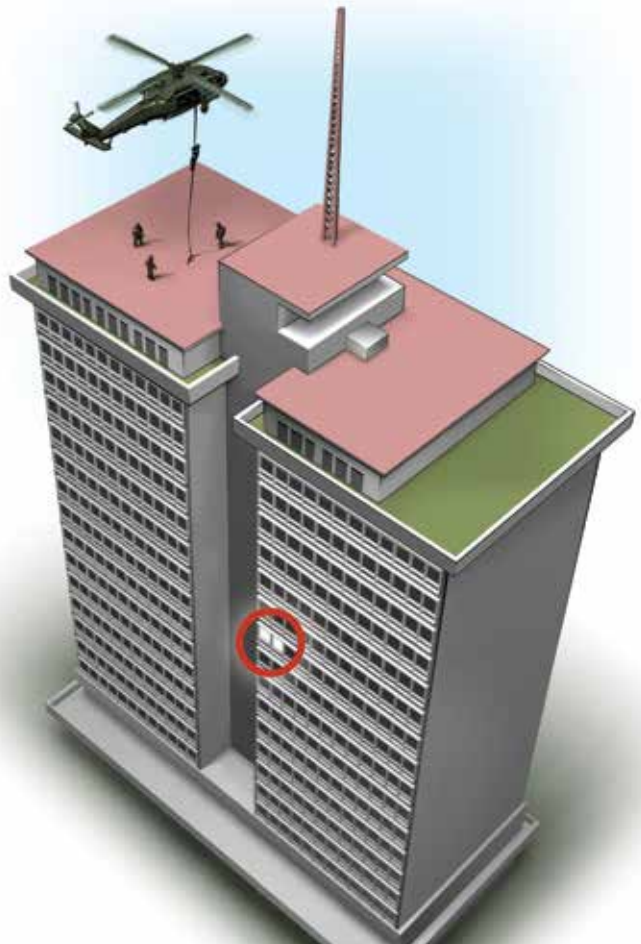
Three helicopters carried the C/3-7th SFG assault, security, and command elements. The fourth was a TF BLACK Command and Control (C2) 'bird' with COL Jacobelly on board. MAJ McCracken and SFC William B. Mercer, the assault CP, would talk with him via secure PSC-5 SATCOM, backed up by a PRC-77 radio with a KY-57 device. The flight time to the target was ten minutes and "went faster than I anticipated," said CPT Louis.¹⁸ As the sun set in the west, the MH-60As approached the building low and from the south. Time on target (TOT) for *Radio Nacional* was 1800 hours.¹⁹

As the lead MH-60A helicopter carrying CPT Louis and members of the assault element approached the rooftop, the pilot aborted, after spotting unidentified individuals in the balconies of a building to the west. The second helicopter, with CW2 Wyrick and the remaining assault force, headed in. Two hundred-thirty feet above ground, SFC Lamb, on the port side threw out the ninety-foot fast rope onto the roof. Wyrick ordered "GO," and soldiers began descending on the rope. "The roof looked like a postage stamp," said SFC Lamb.²⁰ Surface winds caused the rope to drift, so as soon as someone cleared it, he held the rope tight for the next assaulter. As soon as Wyrick's MH-60A unloaded, CPT Louis' helicopter followed the pattern, after circling around the building. MAJ McCracken and SFC William B. Mercer were the last down. After dropping ropes on the roof, the helicopters moved to loiter over the Bay of Panama, awaiting recall.²¹

CPT Stephen R. Boston's security team in the third MH-60A landed on Balboa Avenue, just south of the building. As they approached the entrance from the west, Boston startled a heavyset Panamanian civilian

security guard in a blue uniform. Boston asked in Spanish, "Do you have the keys to the building?" The nervous guard hurriedly pulled them out, and unlocked the front door. The guard was then flex cuffed and secured inside the building. The security element set up three two-man positions around the base of the

3D Graphic of C/3-7th SFG Assault on *Radio Nacional*. After fast roping on the building roof, the assault element cleared down to offices on the seventh floor.

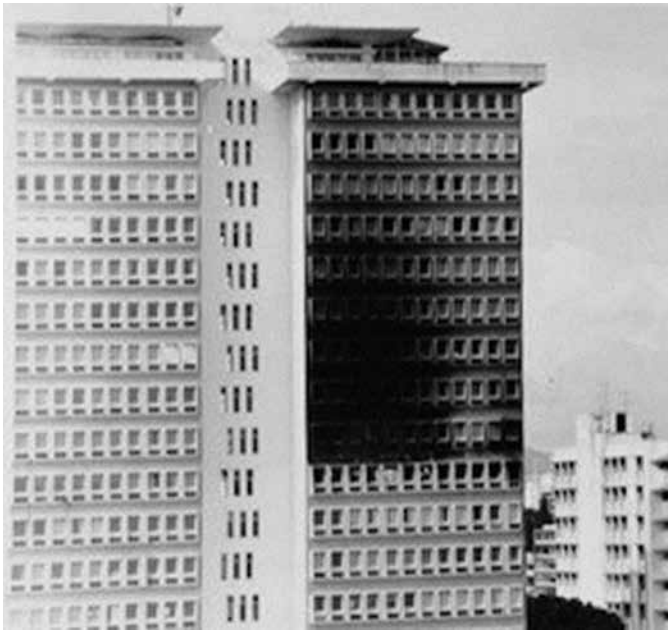


FAST-ROPING:

Fast-roping is a technique used by Army Special Operations Forces to infiltrate soldiers onto an objective, or landing zone, where the helicopter cannot land. The primary advantage of fast-roping over rappelling, is that personnel can reach the objective quicker. Considered more dangerous than rappelling, a soldier is not 'snapped' onto the rope but must slide down the rope, like a fireman on a pole. Several soldiers can be on the rope simultaneously, with an appropriate gap between them for safety.

SFC Richard C. Lamb, ODA 795, Company C, 3-7th SFG, prepares a fast rope from a UH-1 Huey helicopter in Panama during training before Operation JUST CAUSE. SFC Christopher R. Zets assists from inside.





Post-mission photo of the target building, the smoke damage from the fire is clearly visible.

building. A casualty collection point (CCP) was set up in the nearby parking lot. CPT Boston heard gunshots. It was ineffective, sporadic fire coming “from the Yacht club and pier” to the southwest.²²

Meanwhile, two hundred feet above, CPT Louis’s assault force faced a dilemma. The access door on the roof was reinforced steel, and the team did not have enough explosives to blow open the door, cut the antenna on the roof, and still destroy the radio components on the seventh floor. With a “hooligan tool” carried by the assault element, it was a “one-hour door” according to SFC Lamb.²³ SFC Joseph A. Laydon, ODA 791, grabbed a ninety-foot fast rope, tied it to an air conditioning unit, and looked below for a balcony to gain access. There was one on the eastern side below. Their rope secure, SFC Lamb and SSG Smith went over the side.²⁴ On the balcony, they entered, cleared a darkened office, and then swept the hallway, and stairwell, as they moved to open the roof door from the inside.

Avoiding the elevators, the assault team, wearing AN/PVS-5 Night Vision Goggles, used weapon aiming lights and small ‘maglights’ to clear down the stairwell, checking hallways and floor directories on the way, until they reached the seventh floor. As the team cleared inside, they felt the explosion as the demo team blew the radio

antenna off the roof. Assaulters threw improvised flash-bang grenades before clearing rooms. Windows were blown out and tiles fell from the ceiling. In the *Radio Nacional* offices, the team found the broadcast source: a small tape recorder wired to a microphone that played a continuous loop of anti-American propaganda. No one was around.²⁵

Though no wires were visible, the possibility that the tape recorder was ‘booby-trapped’ prompted CPT Louis to clear the room. SSG Smith ‘fired it up’ with his CAR-15 Colt Commando carbine. MAJ McCracken confirmed that the AM broadcasts had stopped but not the FM ones. The assault force now placed six or seven demolitions charges on “racks of commercial style radios, repeaters...stacked on top of each other,” in an adjacent room, according to Smith. SSG John M. Heisse, ODA 793 senior SF Engineer Sergeant, pulled the charge fuse igniters starting “farthest from the door.” The charges rippled off as SSG Heisse ran into the hallway. The assault team moved down the stairs, into the lobby, anticipating exfiltration. Once on the ground floor; however, MAJ McCracken was told by COL Jacobelly that the FM broadcasts were still being made.²⁶

Sprinting back up to the seventh floor, the assault element discovered that the hallway and *Radio Nacional* offices were filling with black smoke from electrical fires created by the explosions. Still, the assaulters rushed through the smoke to find the source of the FM broadcasts. It became “impossible to see your hand in front of [your] face,” said SSG Smith, “and we aborted.”²⁷ They moved back down the stairwell, accounted for all personnel and equipment,

and called for extraction. All were surprised back down in the lobby when an empty elevator door opened with a loud ‘ding.’²⁸

Around the building, the assault and security elements stood at the ready waiting for the helicopters. “Balboa Avenue was alive,” recalled SFC

Lamb. “Looters were out in force. A Volkswagen Beetle zoomed by with a large couch on top. The occupants were screaming ‘USA Numero Uno!’”²⁹ With sporadic gunfire continuing, a Panamanian fire truck drove up, and firefighters rushed to extinguish the flames. As the Americans prepared to leave, an armed civilian security guard, fearful of losing his job, attempted to stop them. The guard drew his pistol. After repeated and unsuccessful efforts to dissuade him in Spanish, he was shot in the shoulder, disarmed, treated, and turned over to the

TAKEAWAYS

1. C/3-7th SFG was the best prepared SOF asset for the *Radio Nacional* mission.
2. Full mission profile rehearsals with the 617th SOAD before JUST CAUSE paid big dividends.



Mission 'Kit'

One SF Soldier's *Radio Nacional* mission 'kit'

Uniform: 'Sterile' (No name tapes or patches)
Tropical, Rip stop, Woodland, Battle Dress Uniform (BDU), Jungle Boots, and Patrol Cap

Weapons: CAR-15 Colt Commando carbine with M203 40mm Grenade Launcher, M9 pistol

Ammunition: twelve each thirty-round magazines of 5.56 ball ammunition, one twenty-round magazine of 5.56 mm tracer ammunition, three each twelve-round pistol magazines of 9mm ball ammunition, ten high explosive, eight 'buckshot,' four mixed parachute and star cluster 40mm rounds, and six 'home made' 'Flash-Bang' stun grenades

Load Carrying Equipment (LCE): standard with Pistol Belt, Shoulder Straps / Harness, four ammunition pouches, two one-quart canteens with water, 'butt pack' with Escape and Evasion items, First Aid Kit, Compass, Strobe Light on Canteen Cover, M-7 Bayonet with M-8 Sheath, 40mm grenade round vest, pistol holster

Communications: MX-300 Motorola Secure Radio with headset and "boom" style microphone

Night Vision Goggles: AN/PVS-5

Miscellaneous: identification tags, standard issue goggles, sun/wind/dust, leather work and NOMEX 'Flight' Gloves, volleyball knee and elbow pads, 'flex' cuffs, 'chem' lights of various colors, map, notepad, and pencil

Body armor: front and back, no helmet

Estimated weight: 70 pounds

SSG Earl G. Meyer, left, and SSG Deams B. Smith, right, of ODA 793, Company C, 3-7th SFG, prior to departure for the *Radio Nacional* mission. Meyer's primary weapon is the Colt Commando CAR-15 assault rifle while Smith has an MP5 sub-machine gun with suppressor. On the wall is a map of Panama used in mission planning.

firemen. When the last helicopter cleared the site, it was 1900 hours. It had been a busy hour for C/3-7th SFG.³⁰

Back at Hangar 450 on Albrook Air Station, Company C soldiers had no time to relax. Panamanian *Radio Nacional* was still transmitting Pro-Noriega messages on FM. MAJ McCracken was now ordered to destroy the *Radio Nacional* remote antenna near the Hippodrome, east of the capital. After a quick debrief, task reorganization, and refit, the assault element was off at 2000 hours for phase two of the operation. Forty-five minutes later, demolitions charges destroyed the remote FM antenna. *Radio Nacional de Panama* was finally 'off the air.'³¹

Although *Radio Nacional* in the *Contraloria General* building in Panama City was not a D-Day target, Company C, 3-7th SFG planned and assaulted the seventeen-story building from the roof down. The mission was characterized by surprise, speed, and violence of action. One Panamanian security guard was wounded. During the first week of January 1990, Company C operations had switched back to its Foreign Internal Defense (FID) mission. A Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) team was launched for Ecuador. The rest of 3-7th SFG transitioned to stability operations throughout Panama.³² 🇺🇸

Endnotes

- 1 Lawrence A. Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama: Operation JUST CAUSE, December 1989-January 1990* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2014), 75-76, quotation from 75; COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken, interview with Robert D. Seals, 1 February 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **One company preplanned mission was cancelled just hours before operations commenced at 0100 hours on 20 December 1989. The day had not been completely uneventful, as Company C was involved in a firefight in the early morning hours near Hangar 450, suffering what proved to be their only casualty of JUST CAUSE, one wounded in action, SFC Julio L. Defilippo.**
- 2 CW3 (Ret.) Deams B. Smith, interview with Robert D. Seals, 16 July 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Smith interview with date; U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History* (MacDill AFB, FL: U.S. Special Operations Command, 1998), 31. **SSG Hector L. Ramos, ODA 793 and a native Spanish speaker, also heard the broadcasts on a small radio that afternoon.**
- 3 COL (Ret.) Robert G. Louis, interview with Robert D. Seals, 28 June 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Validation was a U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) directed program that required SF Detachments to pass a test on a variety of individual skills before a deployment.**
- 4 3-7th SFG, "3-7th SFG AHR, 1 October 1987-30 September 1988," October 1988, 1-2, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

- 5 COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken, interview with Robert D. Seals, 17 January 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. In 1989, C/3-7th SFG consisted of B 790, and ODAs 791, 792, 793, 794, and a consolidated ODA from 795/796 (the RST).
- 6 COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken, notes, 6 March 2019, hereafter McCracken notes; MAJ David E. McCracken, Memorandum for Commander, 3-7th SFG, "SUBJECT: Daily SITREP-Operation NIFTY PACKAGE-Team Charlie, 31 Oct-01 Nov 1989"; and Headquarters, U.S. Army South, "Permanent Orders 184-15: Expert Infantryman Badge," 27 December 1988, copies of all in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Rehearsals were realistic, often at night, using available buildings such as post schools. A Master Sergeant (MSG) was injured, and eventually medically retired after falling forty feet while fast roping. In addition to collective tasks, Company C also stressed individual tasks, to include Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) testing, jumpmaster and sniper schools, and validation/certification leading up to JUST CAUSE. The company was awarded an EIB streamer in 1989 for having sixty-five percent of assigned personnel earn the badge.
- 7 MAJ David E. McCracken, Memorandum for Commander, 3-7th SFG, "SUBJECT: Challenger One Hot Wash Comments for SOCSOUTH," 15 October 1989; CSM (Ret.) Richard C. Lamb, *Radio Nacional* mission questionnaire, 22 July 2019, hereafter Lamb questionnaire with date; and 1-7th SFG, "B-720 Tips, 30 September 1988," copies of all in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Many teams used modified Vietnam-era SF reconnaissance tips in their internal SOPs. B/1-7th SFG published an updated revision of the tips in 1988, including MH-60 and fast rope use. Both C/3-7th SFG and 617th SOAD were credited in the introduction to these operational tips.
- 8 Lamb questionnaire, 22 July 2019; Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama*, 69-70. TF BLACK was under the command and control of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). TFs in the JSOTF were assigned various colors, with TF BLACK being the smallest element of the JSOTF.
- 9 Lamb questionnaire, 22 July 2019.
- 10 Smith interview, 16 July 2019; Yates, *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama*, 51; COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken, *Radio Nacional* mission questionnaire, 2 August 2019, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter McCracken questionnaire with date.: 'Dignity Battalions' were paramilitary pro-regime forces, often in civilian clothes, used to 'strong arm' political opponents. Derisively called 'Ding Bats' by U.S. forces, they potentially posed a law of war dilemma on the battlefield, but were considered a legitimate target. McCracken remembers the SOCSOUTH J-2 not knowing the *Radio Nacional* location, thus the use of the phone book to look up the street address.
- 11 MAJ David E. McCracken, Memorandum for Commander, 3-7th SFG, "SUBJECT: Team Charlie Special Operation-*Contraloria* Building, 21 December 1989," copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; McCracken questionnaire, 2 August 2019. After five cancelled missions, McCracken recalls that the company was grateful for a D-Day mission that afternoon on 20 December 1989.
- 12 COL (Ret.) Robert G. Louis, *Radio Nacional* mission questionnaire, 29 July 2019, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Louis questionnaire with date.
- 13 LTC David E. McCracken, Memorandum for Curator, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Museum, "SUBJECT: Note of Explanation with Company Guidon-C-3-7th SFG," 14 July 1992, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; email from COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken to Robert D. Seals, "SUBJECT: Initial Items for C/3-7th SFG Vignette," 26 January 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Personnel strength was an issue with only an average of eight soldiers assigned per detachment, and no MSGs in the company. CPT Louis was an Officer Candidate School (OCS), and Colombia *Lancero* (Ranger) School graduate who was nicknamed "the 'king' of Venezuela," for repeated missions in that country. He had served previously in 7th SFG as an NCO and in Panama as an Infantry officer.
- 14 Louis interview, 28 June 2019; CW4 (Ret.) Benny L. Wyrick, *Radio Nacional* mission questionnaire, 29 July 2019, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Wyrick questionnaire with date. The Regional Survey Team (RST) had set up a photo processing lab in one of the hangar latrines.
- 15 Louis questionnaire, 29 July 2019; Colonel (Ret.) Stephen R. Boston, interview with Robert D. Seals, 17 July 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 16 Email from COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken to Robert D. Seals, 26 January 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Current Army deliberate risk assessment doctrine categorizes risk levels as extremely high, high, medium, or low according to hazards and control measures.
- 17 Louis, questionnaire, 29 July 2019.
- 18 COL (Ret.) Robert G. Louis, interview with Robert D. Seals, 26 July 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Louis interview with date.
- 19 Email from COL (Ret.) David E. McCracken to Robert D. Seals, "SUBJECT: New Team Charlie Article assignment, Friday," 9 July 2019, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; McCracken Memorandum, 21 December 1989; "Sunset times Panama," online at <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/panama/month=12>. The following day, 21 December, was the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of 1989.
- 20 Wyrick questionnaire, 29 July 2019; Smith interview, 16 July 2019; Lamb questionnaire, 22 July 2019; McCracken questionnaire, 2 August 2019. Wyrick recalls the pilots having trouble with the winds and drift. Two green 'chem' lights were tied to mark the end of the rope, a safety measure, according to SOP. McCracken remembers an attached Special Operations Team-Alpha (SOT-A) Military Intelligence NCO giving him a report of 'no chatter' from the building during infiltration.
- 21 Louis interview, 26 July 2019; Wyrick questionnaire, 29 July 2019. Wyrick remembers borrowing a fast rope from A/1-7th SFG for the mission. The rope was left on the roof, becoming an accountability issue later during a change of command inventory. The rope was ultimately written off the property books as a combat loss.
- 22 Boston interview, 17 July 2019. He was released as the unit exfiltrated from the mission.
- 23 CW3 (Ret.) Smith interview, 16 July 2019; Lamb questionnaire, 22 July 2019. The demolitions charges were standard composition C-4 (2 1/2 pound blocks), primed with non-electrical blasting caps, 30-second timed fuse with M-60 fuse igniters. The assault element 'demo' team carried 4-5 charges per man in bags manufactured by the 3-7th SFG Parachute Riggers. A 'hooligan tool' is a combination axe, sledgehammer, and pick carried by the assault team.
- 24 Email from COL (Ret.) Robert G. Louis to Robert D. Seals, "SUBJECT: RE: JUST CAUSE, Charlie Co RN DA Draft, Friday," 2 August 2019, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. To Louis, the NCOs on the roof demonstrated initiative and a clear understanding of the commander's intent since they had a recommended solution by the time he arrived on the roof.
- 25 Louis questionnaire, 29 July 2019; email from CW3 (Ret.) Deams B. Smith to Robert D. Seals, "SUBJECT: RE: JUST CAUSE Charlie Co *Radio Nacional* DA Article, Friday Update," 28 July 2019, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 26 Louis questionnaire, 29 July 2019; Lamb questionnaire 22 July 2019.
- 27 Smith interview, 16 July 2019.
- 28 Wyrick questionnaire, 29 July 2019; Smith interview, 16 July 2019.
- 29 Lamb questionnaire 22 July 2019.
- 30 Louis questionnaire, 29 July 2019; Smith interview, 16 July 2019.
- 31 MAJ David E. McCracken, Memorandum for Commander, 3-7th SFG, "SUBJECT: Team Charlie Special Operation-*Radio Nacional* Antenna, 21 December 1989," copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 McCracken notes, 6 March 2019. 7th Special Forces Group was awarded Panama Campaign Participation Credit by Army General Order (AGO) 20 on 30 August 1991 for JUST CAUSE. C/3-7th SFG was credited with a helicopter assault landing (arrowhead device) by the U.S. Army Military Awards Branch for the *Radio Nacional* mission on 7 September 2000.