

# *Night Stalker* *Ingenuity*



Taking the ~~'Bad Guy'~~ off the Battlefield  
without Black Helicopters

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Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Phillip W. Fox\* left the hangar after an early-morning discussion with officers of the *Coordenadoria de Recursos Especiais* (CORE), a special tactics unit belonging to the Rio de Janeiro Civil Police, and pilots of the *Serviço Aeropolicial* (SAER), the CORE air wing. The day before, Fox\* and a small aviation foreign internal defense (AvFID) team from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) (Airborne) (3/160th) had completed a week-long subject matter expert exchange (SMEE) with the Brazilian CORE and SAER. He had been asked to clarify some points on Sunday morning. Across the flight line, the Night Stalker saw police armed with M4 carbines boarding SAER Airbus AS-350(B3) *Écureuils*, and UH-1 *Huey II*'s, before launching in late-morning. Several hours later, they returned with a large quantity of illegal drugs, and several major traffickers in handcuffs.<sup>1</sup> Success could be attributed to solid tactics, techniques, procedures, and planning, emphasized during the SMEE. The 3/160th AvFID team had built partner capacity and helped the Brazilians hone their skills. This was a tactical victory in the fight to improve national security for both Brazil and the United States.<sup>2</sup>

The SOAR flies, maintains, and tests rotary-wing and unmanned aircraft to provide long range assault and fire support to special operations forces at night and in adverse conditions. At its core, the SOAR exists, according to now-CW3 Fox\*, "to take the 'bad guy' off the battlefield."<sup>3</sup> One way to reduce threats while advancing national strategic objectives is to train and cultivate relationships with the security agencies of partner nations.<sup>4</sup> Doing so improves their capabilities and increases interoperability between ground and air units, military and otherwise.<sup>5</sup> This article explains how a small, dedicated group of individuals in 3/160th created a formal AvFID program from the bottom-up between 2012 and 2016, at the same time that U.S. national strategy increasingly emphasized building partner capacity.<sup>6</sup> It further argues that the program achieved tactical through strategic-level success in Brazil.

From 1994 to October 2012, the U.S. Air Force's 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron (6<sup>th</sup> SOS) was tasked by the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to provide rotary-wing training to partner nations.<sup>7</sup> In the Western Hemisphere, however, elements of the SOAR were forward deployed with U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) in Panama (see sidebar).

The 617<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Detachment (617<sup>th</sup> SOAD), later D Company, SOAR (A), regularly participated in *ad hoc* engagements with regional aviation units, usually while supporting training conducted by 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (7<sup>th</sup> SFG).<sup>8</sup> However, the relocation of D Company from Panama to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, in 1999, and then to Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, GA, in 2003, increased the cost of conducting training in Central and South America, and the Caribbean.<sup>9</sup> In the early-2000s, the demand for rotary-wing support in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, Africa, and Colombia exceeded the Army's ability to provide such support.<sup>10</sup> As a result of that high demand, particularly in the Middle East, SOAR engagement with partner aviation units declined, especially in the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR).<sup>11</sup>

Between 2006 and 2016, several factors intensified the demand for 3/160th AvFID efforts in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. First, national strategy increasingly called for training partner aviation forces to combat terrorism and contribute to global stability. Doing so would reduce the demand on overstretched U.S. soldiers and materiel, and provide a cost-effective special operations forces (SOF) aviation capability where an overt U.S. presence was politically untenable.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on working with partner nations was reflected in geographic combatant command (GCC) and theater special operations command (TSOC) planning, resulting in greater demand for 3/160th assets.

Second, as part of the Department of Defense's (DoD) long-term plan to transfer rotary-wing responsibility to the Army, the Air Force drew-down its helicopter



The U.S. Air Force 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron (6<sup>th</sup> SOS) was responsible for aviation foreign internal defense (AvFID) training before USSOCOM transferred responsibility to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command in 2012. Because of the 3/160 relationship with USSOUTHCOM, the SOAR conducted 'side FID,' or 'pick-up FID' in the 1990s, and was regularly tasked to support FID in the late-2000s.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR

## Unique Relationship with U.S. Southern Command

In October 1986, the 129<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Company (SOAC) was activated at Hunter Army Airfield (AAF), GA.<sup>1</sup> It provided one *Black Hawk* platoon (provisionally activated as the 617<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Detachment [SOAD]) to support U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). In October 1987, the 617<sup>th</sup> SOAD was formally activated at Howard Air Force Base, Panama. It relied on the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Group for administration, logistics, and standardization support.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1988, the 129<sup>th</sup> SOAC was inactivated, with personnel and equipment transferring to the newly constituted and activated A Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 160<sup>th</sup> Aviation (3/160<sup>th</sup>).<sup>3</sup> The 617<sup>th</sup> SOAD remained in Panama, as 3/160<sup>th</sup> reorganized the following year as a battalion under the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR). In June 1995, the 617<sup>th</sup> SOAD was inactivated, and replaced with a separate D Company under the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR Headquarters.

On December 31, 1999, the Panama Canal Treaty officially abolished the Panama Canal Zone, giving operations of the interoceanic waterway to the government of Panama.<sup>4</sup> As a result, headquarters, USSOUTHCOM, relocated to Miami, FL, and elements of the command moved to various areas. D Company was relocated to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, in 1999.<sup>5</sup> D Company transferred again, joining the rest of 3/160 at Hunter AAF, when Roosevelt Roads closed in August 2003. Even after the relocation, however, the *Black Hawk* platoon remained under the operational control (OPCON) of USSOUTHCOM.<sup>6</sup>



The pocket patch worn by members of the 617<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Detachment.

capability in the early-2000s.<sup>13</sup> As a result, demand for Army rotary-wing AvFID increased, and in 2012 USSOCOM transferred responsibility for training partner nations from the 6<sup>th</sup> SOS to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).<sup>14</sup> The newly established U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (USASOAC) stood up a cell to support USSOCOM and TSOC AvFID requirements, especially in the U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command, and U.S. Central Command AORs.<sup>15</sup> However, the SOAR's Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) was structured for warfighting, not FID, limiting their ability to train partner forces.<sup>16</sup> Since elements of 3/160<sup>th</sup> remained under the operational control (OPCON) of USSOUTHCOM, the battalion would assist with conducting AvFID in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>17</sup>

Third, the five-year effort to rescue three American contractors held hostage by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)* in Colombia convinced some participants that improving partner nation interoperability was critical. The Colombian Army's successful rescue of the hostages demonstrated the potential for achieving operational success 'without black helicopters.' This conclusion led to increased demand for joint combined exchange training (JCET) in the region.<sup>18</sup> While the demand for support increased, 3/160<sup>th</sup> AvFID was still conducted *ad hoc* in the late-2000s.

According to then-Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Kirk E. Keepers, 3/160<sup>th</sup> commander from 2009–2011, increased demand on the battalion required "maximizing capacity" by ensuring training events supported the TSOC and helped Night Stalkers obtain qualifications.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the cooperative relationship between 3/160<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR (A) (4/160<sup>th</sup>) created scheduling flexibility, as 4/160<sup>th</sup> occasionally 'covered' rotations to the Middle East. Third battalion 'paid-back' those rotations, Keepers noted, and it was "guys sacrificing dwell time" that allowed 3/160<sup>th</sup> to support its USSOUTHCOM theater requirement and the national mission.<sup>20</sup>

In 2009, Keepers made CW5 William D. 'Dean' Vanderberry a part-time 3/160<sup>th</sup> liaison (LNO) to Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH).<sup>21</sup> Vanderberry, a Flight Lead and son of an Air Force Senior Master Sergeant, served in the position until 2012.<sup>22</sup> He was chosen for the position because of his experience in the AOR, having served in D Company in the 1990s, and his ability to balance the role with his responsibilities as a subject matter expert in other areas.<sup>23</sup>

As the SOCSOUTH LNO, Vanderberry occasionally led AvFID-type missions, similar to those the unit had conducted since the late-1980s. Vanderberry's goal was to develop a program that worked with partner nation units to identify the type of training they wanted, assess their skill level, and determine how to help them achieve their objectives with a self-sustaining program. The keys to engagement, Vanderberry concluded, were

finding individuals within 3/160th whose personalities were conducive to building relationships and developing trust, to set the basis for long-term engagement based on feedback from the partner nation. Relationships, consistency, and tailored training—humans not hardware—were the core of the program. Maintaining consistent contact with specific units, however, was challenging, since priority countries occasionally changed at the GCC level.<sup>24</sup>

Nearing retirement, in 2012, Vanderberry asked to work with then-CW4 Robert X. Villarreal, a Fully Mission Qualified pilot who Vanderberry hoped would assume the role of SOCSOUTH LNO and further develop an AvFID program after his departure. In addition to his Spanish fluency, Villarreal was a prior-enlisted Ranger, which gave him the rare ability to provide the first-hand perspective of both a ground soldier and a pilot. Vanderberry and Villarreal then developed a schedule of standardized classes to teach partner nations.<sup>25</sup> They worked with the 160th Training Development and Support Cell (TDSC), and the Regimental S-2, for disclosure authorization of selected training material. Soon after, the two began implementing the program, taking available personnel within the battalion on site surveys and training trips in the USSOUTHCOM AOR, identifying challenges along the way. In particular, DoD instructions and unfavorable risk assessments kept them from riding on partner nation aircraft, at times complicating efforts to establish trust with counterparts.<sup>26</sup>

The Army's commitment to rotary-wing AvFID expanded over the next two years, as 3/160th responded to increased demand from USSOUTHCOM. In 2013, Lieutenant General (LTG) Charles T. Cleveland, Commanding General, USASOC, introduced ARSOF 2022, which reflected national guidance in emphasizing the need for building capacity in partner forces.<sup>27</sup> In August of that year, 3/160th began working with the Brazilian *Coordenação de Aviação Operacional* (CAOP) during a SMEE.<sup>28</sup> The engagement enhanced 3/160th's AvFID capability, and established a foundation for future cooperation in Brazil.

In July 2014, two events furthered the evolution of 3/160th's AvFID efforts. First, then-Major (MAJ) Matthew L. Parker, a 160th alum, was assigned to the TSOC and became the Air Operations Officer for SOCSOUTH.<sup>29</sup> With MAJ Parker as a conduit to SOCSOUTH, 3/160th was able to effectively engage the U.S. interagency, embassy teams, and partner nations. They were also better able to discern the operational objectives of the TSOC and GCC, and to articulate the aviation-specific aspects of FID to SOCSOUTH. Specifically, SOCSOUTH agreed to recognize four AvFID priority countries, alleviating the challenge of shifting efforts and inconsistent engagement. Thus, the battalion's AvFID program was enhanced, and its integration into theater planning was improved.<sup>30</sup>

Second, then-LTC Ronald C. Black, 3/160th commander from 2013–2015, decided to formalize AvFID to support consistent tasking from SOCSOUTH. LTC Black tasked Villarreal and then-CW2 Fox\*, a native of Pendleton, SC, with developing a dedicated AvFID program. In addition to being a Fully Mission Qualified pilot and company safety officer, Fox\* was conversant in Spanish, and

## Brazilian Units

Responsibility for counter-terrorist and other domestic special missions in Brazil is shared between Special Operations units in state-level Military Police Departments and state-level Civil Police Departments. The Brazilian Federal Police (DPF) are the nation's lead counterterrorism agency, though the Brazilian Armed Forces are permitted to intervene to maintain law and order in defense of the nation or to guarantee the constitution.<sup>1</sup>

Between 2013 and 2016, the 3/160 AvFID team worked with the units listed below:

### CAOP



*Coordenação de Aviação Operacional* – rotary-wing unit of the federal police; Counter Illegal Trafficking, Counter Terror, Counter Organized Crime, support to other Federal Police Units.

### CAVEX



*Comando de Aviação do Exército*– Army Special Operations Aviation Unit.

### CORE



*Coordenadoria de Recursos Especiais*– Police Tactical Unit of the Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro state.

### COT



*Comando de Operações Táticas*– Counter-terrorism unit of the Federal Police

### SAER



*Serviço Aeropolicial*–Special Tactics aviation Unit in the Rio de Janeiro Civil Police.

quickly learned Portuguese.<sup>31</sup> LTC Black noted that, since 3/160th did not have MTOE positions for FID, he decided to stand-up an internal cell to create the program. The cell aligned its travel with quarterly trips to the AOR to reduce the effects of the additional workload. The cell developed the AvFID model, and drove the process, while LTC Black ensured policies, procedures, and regulations were aligned.<sup>32</sup> LTC Black emphasized that “Dean Vanderberry, Bobby Villarreal, and Phil Fox\* are the real superstars. I just supported because they were crushing it.”<sup>33</sup>

Then, in August 2014, Villarreal and Fox\* routed their initial plan to LTC Black. They proposed using small teams of 3/160th advisors to fulfill four primary FID roles: assessment, training, advising, and assisting partner nations. Villarreal and Fox\* proposed a five-

## “Develop and sustain their ability to utilize aviation assets and support their defense.”

— MAJ Matthew L. Parker,  
Air Operations Officer for SOCSOUTH

phased approach to AvFID. After appraising the partner’s baseline capabilities in phase one, basic SOF mission planning would be conducted in phase two. Phase three would entail advanced SOF mission planning, progressing into advanced aircraft tactics, techniques, and procedures in phase four. Phase five would involve a full mission profile (FMP) exercise, and continuity training in an advise and assist role for 3/160th.<sup>34</sup> Crucially, the program was grounded on mission planning and classroom training, not training in 160th aircraft. Throughout the next year, Villarreal and Fox\* honed their plan, working on a formal 3/160th AvFID guide as national strategy continued to prioritize partnering as a means of protecting U.S. interests.<sup>35</sup>

In January 2015, a SOCSOUTH Mission Guidance Letter to 3/160th directed the unit to “build enduring relationships and be the military partner of choice for partner nation near-peer conventional aviation and aviation special operations forces.” SOCSOUTH emphasized that those “relationships are foundational to [the] success of our long-term strategy.” Partnering included FID to “develop unit skills and capabilities of selected partner nation SOF.”<sup>36</sup> According to Parker, AvFID would help partner nations “develop and sustain their ability to utilize aviation assets and support their defense.” Moreover, AvFID would contribute to developing “interoperable aviation forces to support U.S. forces requiring mobility” in contingency operations.<sup>37</sup> The ability to communicate in host nation language, the memorandum noted, was important, a point that the 3/160th AvFID cell consistently emphasized.<sup>38</sup>

The same month, a six-man 3/160th team traveled to Brazil to conduct an AvFID Phase 1 assessment, and to prepare the CAOP for follow-on engagements. Villarreal led a five-man Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS), while Fox\* participated in a SMEE.<sup>39</sup> The team met with representatives from the CAOP to invite the unit to participate in an upcoming JCET, and discuss what training they would like to conduct during the event. The CAOP “went all-in” in deciding to work with 3/160th, according to Fox\*. The visit laid the groundwork for what the AvFID cell expected to be the “proof of concept” for their program over the coming months.<sup>40</sup>

During the PDSS, the team met with the U.S. Military Group (MILGRP), Army and Air Force Section Chiefs, and the Defense Attaché Office (DAO), as well as Brazilian Air Force and civilian aviation authorities. Those interactions allowed the team to obtain clearance for flight operations with U.S. military aircraft in Brazilian airspace. Finally, meeting with leaders in the Brazilian aviation units helped the AvFID team develop a training plan for the JCET and SMEE later in the year.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, the classroom conversation during the January SMEE focused on establishing a maintenance and operations baseline. The discussion assessed Brazil’s aviation readiness, and contributed to the development of basic mission planning formats and products. The conversation overviewed tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for different environments, maintenance programing, and enhanced mission planning. Perhaps most significantly, it allowed the 3/160th AvFID team to establish relations with the Brazilian law enforcement SOF community. The variety of assessments gave the AvFID team an understanding of Brazil’s aviation readiness.<sup>42</sup> The assessment also resulted in an acknowledgment that the CAOP was ‘Phase 1 complete,’ setting the stage for more advanced training during JCET 452 later in the year.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the spring of 2015, Fox\*, Villarreal, and MAJ Christopher T. Wickam\*, then the battalion operations

officer, revised and completed a 3/160th AvFID guide. The nearly-200 page document standardized AvFID efforts in the battalion. It carefully outlined “lessons learned, best practices, and checklists” to “aid in the conceptualization, planning, execution, and recovery of units” working with partners in Central and South America.<sup>44</sup> Building on years of groundwork, Villarreal and Fox\* finished formalizing the program as LTC Black had directed.

The AvFID team’s work paid off when the Secretary of Defense approved JCET 452 to Brazil as part of the 2015 Global Force Management Allocation Plan. Per that plan, 3/160th trained with forty personnel from the Brazilian *Diretoria Executiva, Policia Federal*, and nine individuals from the Brazilian Special Operations Command. The JCET took place from 20 June to 31 July in Brasilia, the nation’s capital, and Goiania, where the Army’s Special Operations Brigade (*Brigada de Operações Especiais*) is headquartered.<sup>45</sup> The aviation portion took place from 16 to 31 July, and was the first implementation of the AvFID cell’s ‘five-phase process.’<sup>46</sup> Training focused on a variety of joint mission-essential task list items, including operations planning, rotary-wing integration, helicopter infiltration and exfiltration techniques, and joint terminal attack control.<sup>47</sup>

During the exercise, nine pilots and thirty enlisted members of 3/160th, and six airmen from the U.S. Air Force 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group, conducted training using two MH-60M *Black Hawks* brought into the country on a C-17 *Globemaster III*. The training was extensive, and included strategic air operations, day and night air-land operations, day and night fast rope insertion

and extraction system operations (FRIES), USSOCOM currency training in support of aircrews and the ground force, urban and multimode radar currencies, and time sensitive target and deliberate mission planning and execution. It culminated with an FMP scenario in Brasilia.<sup>48</sup> During the FMP scenario, Fox\* notes, “CAOP helicopters performed sniper over-watch and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) operations between assault force lifts of 160th MH-60Ms. CAOP crews were included in the 160th planning cell, and helped the 160th with operations in the airspace. Our mutually supporting efforts provided continuous coverage to the ground force. It was truly combined, with U.S. and Brazilian aircraft affecting the same targets.”<sup>49</sup>

The JCET helped the AvFID team identify lessons used to refine their program. In particular, they noted that conducting a SMEE simultaneous to a ground force JCET led to competition for assets between the Brazilian units. Moving forward, they decided to conduct the aviation SMEE “before the JCET to expose the aviation assets to the concepts they would see in the following days.”<sup>50</sup>

JCET 452 was the ‘proof of concept’ for the AvFID teaching model that 3/160th had been developing since 2012. The 3/160th-7<sup>th</sup> SFG event facilitated cooperation between the CAOP and the *Comando de Operações Táticas* (COT), the counterterrorism unit of the federal police, integrating Brazilian air and ground forces in a counterterrorism exercise. The success of the ‘teach-demonstrate-evaluate plan,’ according to Fox\*, “had nothing to do with black helicopters.” Its effectiveness lent credence to the cell’s plan for ‘no-aircraft’ training the following spring, an important methodological

Two 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR Black Hawks insert 7th Special Forces Group and Brazilian COT via FRIES during JCET 452 in Brasilia, in July 2015.

3/160th AvFID Logo

USAF 720th STG Crest





A CAOP AS-355 *Écureuil 2* lifts off after leaving sniper overwatch to perform a casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) during the JCET 452 full mission profile scenario.

advancement for the unit, as well as an efficient one that considerably reduced the cost of conducting FID.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the direct benefits to the 160th, JCET 452 demonstrated the CAOP's capabilities, and gave the 160th credibility as a partner for the Brazilian unit. The CAOP's interest in further engagement, and their proven ability, convinced the AvFID cell to make the CAOP the center of follow-on training in early-2016. According to Fox\*, the AvFID cell wanted to "demonstrate [our] ability to go down there and prepare a partner nation force to execute missions with American special operations forces against a target that we deem appropriate."<sup>52</sup> Following JCET 452, U.S.-Brazilian cooperation primarily focused on preparing for the 2016 Olympic Games scheduled for the following summer in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, JCET 452 laid the groundwork for a significant strategic success for the AvFID team. After the training, members of the 160th attended a barbeque at the invitation of their Brazilian counterparts. During the social, Fox\* was introduced to Marcelo Guerrante, State Aviation Coordinator at the Brazilian civil aviation agency. During the conversation, Fox\* was asked to attend the International Public Aviation Conference in Rio de Janeiro, scheduled for November. During the conference, the Brazilians would be considering revisions to *Regulamento Brasileiro Da Aviação Civil-90* (RBAC-90). Guerrante described the law as "an innovative regulation to outline requirements for public safety and civil defense [aviation] operations."<sup>54</sup> Recognizing the value of participating in the discussions, 3/160th added the event as a SMEE.<sup>55</sup>

In late-September, CW5 Villarreal accepted a position as the Senior Fully Mission Qualified Pilot and

Maintenance Test Pilot, in D Company, 3/160th.<sup>56</sup> He was awarded a Legion of Merit for his work as part of the AvFID cell upon retirement, in 2018.<sup>57</sup> Villarreal was replaced by CW5 Shawn B. Cutler\*, an FMQ pilot with considerable experience in the USSOUTHCOM AOR, including support to FID in the 1990s. The change in LNOs and battalion commanders portended a shift in priorities. New leadership advocated engagement with Brazil in support of Olympics security, while scaling-back the AvFID program to shift limited resources to other mission sets.<sup>58</sup>

In October 2015, CW5 Cutler\* traveled to Brazil for a PDSS to maintain engagement with the Brazilians, and in November a 3/160th team returned to Brazil for a SMEE in conjunction with the aviation conference. Throughout the conference, newly-promoted CW3 Fox\* talked with Brazilian law enforcement aviation professionals about special operations aviation. He discussed his experiences, best practices, and fundamentals of tactical flight and asset deployment, dispelling rumors and misunderstandings about nighttime operations.<sup>59</sup> While CW5 Cutler\* was re-tasked elsewhere on a high-priority mission, Fox\* spent five hours talking with the *Agência Nacional de Aviação Civil* (ANAC) director, the director of the American Law Enforcement Aviation Association, and a small group of key Brazilian officials.<sup>60</sup> By the end of the conference, an updated RBAC-90 had been drafted. It addressed a number of issues, including night vision goggle (NVG) operations, standard operating procedures, and low altitude flights.<sup>61</sup> Thus, a major obstacle was overcome, improving Brazilian units' ability to "more effectively conduct advanced special

operations while increasing the safety of civilians.<sup>62</sup> A few days after the SMEE ended, 3/160th was tasked with supporting additional training in March 2016.

In early 2016, 3/160th began planning for the coming engagements with their Brazilian counterparts. In January, a SOCSOUTH memo validated the air worthiness of Brazilian aircraft, specifically, those of the CAOP.<sup>63</sup> Two days later, CW5 Cutler\* submitted a Traditional Commander's Activities (TCA) request to USSOUTHCOM to train with the Brazilian *Comando de Aviação do Exército* (CAVEX), the Brazilian Army's special operations aviation unit which had been tasked with supporting Brazilian SOF for the Olympics.<sup>64</sup> The first week of February, CW3 Fox\* again traveled to Brazil for a PDSS, reinforcing the cell's emphasis on persistent engagement and developing relationships with partners.<sup>65</sup>

"As the LNOs prepared to reach program actualization," Fox\* explained, "international and intradepartmental politics, and changing CENTCOM combat demands 'threw a major curveball' at the battalion. It was the perfect storm of complications at the most inopportune time. The most confounding problem was that the CAOP was forced to withdraw from the exercise just three weeks from mission execution. The small size of the no-aircraft model," however, "allowed us to flex to a new partner force."<sup>66</sup> As a result, the Special Operations Liaison Officer (SOLO) and the Brazilians identified other special operations units for the event. Ultimately, 3/160th supported the *Serviço Aeropolicial* (SAER), a special tactics aviation unit in the Rio de Janeiro Civil Police.<sup>67</sup> Members of the Brazilian Navy, state special operations police, and observer units were part of the training.<sup>68</sup> The AvFID team's persistent engagement and relationship building with the wider Brazilian special operations community were crucial to quickly overcoming the unexpected change.

The ensuing training was, according to Fox\*, the objective toward which the AvFID team had been striving for four years: "a no-aircraft" training event. All training was in the classroom, or using Brazilian aircraft.<sup>69</sup> From 6–29 March, a five-man team from 3/160th traveled to Rio de Janeiro for a SMEE and follow-on training with the CORE and SAER. The events would help develop direct-action air assault capabilities, interoperability between Brazilian and U.S. SOF, and facilitate collaboration during major events. A key to the plan was adapting the training to the Brazilians' requests, including for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support to the ground force, reducing acoustic signature, and techniques for conducting time sensitive targeting.<sup>70</sup> Training emphasized integration of aviation mission planners into ground mission planning to apply key concepts and test capabilities. Units conducted an operational preparation of the environment (OPE) to prepare for the upcoming Olympics.<sup>71</sup> During the

FMP, the SAER provided ISR, sniper over-watch, and CASEVAC support for U.S. and Brazilian SOF at the 2016 Olympic venues. The FMP, Fox\* noted, "was critical to establishing trust in the ground forces and showcasing their aviation capabilities."<sup>72</sup>

The March training event led to tactical improvements for the partner force, while contributing to 2016 Olympics preparation for both the U.S. and Brazil. The exercise refined the use of partner nation LNOs in U.S. and Brazilian ground force operations. Specifically, the SAER pilot bridged the gap between the LNO and joint terminal attack controller (JTAC). As a state police officer, the pilot imbedded with the U.S. and Brazilian SOF ground force during execution. The exercise refined the Brazilians' aircraft planning and integration into the ground force scheme of maneuver. This was demonstrated as they controlled the ISR aircraft's sensors while simultaneously relaying the ground force commander's requests for aircraft support. The exercise also provided the 3/160th an in-depth understanding of the real-world threat picture in Rio de Janeiro via sharing of intelligence and ISR footage. Finally, the event led to the completion of an operational appraisal checklist for the SAER, laying the groundwork for future cooperation with U.S. forces.<sup>73</sup>

On the Saturday after the SMEE, CW3 Fox\* received a phone call from a Brazilian counterpart, asking him to stop by the SAER operations center early the following morning. When he arrived, several members of the SAER were already there. They discussed mission planning, and asked for clarification on a class Fox\* gave "on acoustic masking, sound wave propagation, masking the aircraft from fire, and landing zone selection" five



The *Serviço Aeropolicial* (SAER) and *Coordenadoria de Recursos Especiais* (CORE) captured a large quantity of cocaine, weapons, and contraband in March 2016, in part by implementing lessons discussed during a SMEE with 3/160th personnel the previous week.



days earlier.<sup>74</sup> After the session, the unsuspecting Fox\* walked out of the hangar, pleased with the outcome of the training, and the development of 3/160th's AvFID program over the course of four years.

As he left the hangar, Fox\* saw CORE officers boarding SAER aircraft, preparing to launch. Within hours, the SAER helicopters returned, having assisted their ground force (the CORE) in a major drug interdiction, in part by applying lessons learned in the just-completed training.<sup>75</sup> That operation, Fox\* noted, "demonstrated that a 3/160th SMEE was immediately successful in covering an information gap, connecting a few dots, and enabling a partner unit to achieve a major tactical success less than 48 hours after training ended." The key, Fox\* observed, "was not black helicopters."<sup>76</sup>

As the Olympics neared, CW5 Cutler\* staffed the funding requests and built a team for one last engagement, near Taubate, Brazil.<sup>77</sup> From 9 to 13 May, Cutler's\* five-man team exchanged ideas, experiences, and lessons learned with the CAVEX, which had recently been tasked as the primary rapid response unit for the Olympics.<sup>78</sup> The CAVEX, Cutler\* noted, was "a highly capable, near-peer unit."<sup>79</sup> Their aircraft were well-maintained, and crews were well-trained, including in NVG operations.<sup>80</sup>

Then-CW3 Timothy S. Crockett\* similarly noted that the exchange "was very much a 'give-and-take,' with classes taught alternately by the Brazilians and Americans." Classes covered a range of topics, including lessons learned, techniques, and mission planning.<sup>81</sup>

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Charles C. MacRaven\*, who worked with the Brazilians on several occasions, noted that personal relationships were fundamental to mission success. MacRaven\* observed "a lot of commonalities in the personalities of Brazilian counterparts." There was constant engagement, and the team ate all of its meals with the Brazilians. "Lunches kept getting larger as more individuals from class showed up," MacRaven\* explained, and "bonds were formed" as conversations drifted between work and personal topics. The engagement, he concluded, was highly successful, though he hoped in the future to include partner nation crew members in the discussion.<sup>82</sup>

The CAVEX's competence, and the relationships established over three years, precluded a need for additional training. The ensuing dialogue considered many of the skills and objectives 3/160th and Brazilian partner units had been cooperating on for the previous year. They discussed direct-action air assault, U.S.-Brazilian interoperability, and integration of Brazilian Army aviation into a potential joint, combined task force.<sup>83</sup> Once again, the objective was met without using 3/160th aircraft. CAVEX pilots and maintenance personnel were supported in Maintenance Test Pilot Operations, Jungle Operations, Urban Operations, Flight in Degraded Weather Conditions, and Battlespace De-confliction, culminating in Aviation Enablement of Time Sensitive Target TTPs.<sup>84</sup> Thus, Brazilian special operations units reached a new level of proficiency on the eve of the 2016 Olympics, an event that drew 500,000 U.S. spectators.<sup>85</sup>



Official logo of the 2016 Olympics held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Weapons captured from a separate raid conducted by the CORE are sobering examples of how heavily-armed the criminal networks are.

## CONCLUSION:

The 3/160th AvFID cell's ambitious efforts over several years resulted in a formal AvFID capability in the battalion, and nested well during the development of the Special Operations Aviation Advisory Directorate (SOAAD).<sup>86</sup> In implementing the program, 3/160th achieved tactical through strategic successes in Brazil in the year prior to the Olympics. Tactically, direct application of trained skills led to a major drug interdiction. Operationally, persistent engagement led to improvements in partner nation capabilities, and established familiarity that made interoperability possible, had a crisis struck at the Olympics. The U.S. Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, for example, noted a dramatic improvement in Brazil's "interagency and international cooperation on counterterrorism issues in 2016."<sup>87</sup> Strategically, RBAC-90 passed a public hearing, and is in the final phase of deliberation by the Board of Directors of ANAC.<sup>88</sup> It improved the legal framework within which near-peer partner forces can operate, enhancing their ability to provide internal security, and to work with U.S. SOF.

3/160th's success came despite limited resources, and was the result of several key factors. As CW5 Vanderberry recognized early on, personal relationships were the foundation of the AvFID program, allowing for persistent engagement and creating opportunities to overcome unexpected complications. Working with the Brazilians to identify what they wanted to train, and developing a program that addressed both U.S. and partner nation needs established trust with the partner nation.

Ultimately, the 3/160th AvFID cell created a program that demonstrated how a small number of individuals could significantly enhance a partner nation's ability to conduct special operations. This directly supports national strategy that continues to emphasize the importance of partnering to improve U.S. security. The 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes that "partnerships are crucial to [U.S.] strategy." It calls for countering subversion "by, with, and through" partners, "pool[ing] resources and shar[ing] responsibility for common defense," and "deepen[ing] interoperability" to "achieve military objectives."<sup>89</sup> Similarly, USSOUTHCOM's 2018 Posture Statement emphasized the need to "build a regional security network of principled, inclusive partnerships" to counter threats to the United States before they reach the homeland.<sup>90</sup> The successful cooperation between 3/160th and Brazilian units and agencies in enhancing that nation's special operations aviation capabilities validates the AvFID cell's program, and supports national strategy in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. 📌

### JOSHUA D. ESPOSITO, PhD

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## Endnotes

- 1 CW3 Phillip W. Fox\*, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 6 March 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. Email from CW3 Phillip W. Fox\* to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 28 November 2018, hereafter cited by name and date. Fox\* was promoted to CW3 on 1 November 2015.
- 2 "Defending the southern approaches to the U.S." has long been a cornerstone of U.S. Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM) strategic purpose. The current Theater Campaign plan emphasizes "promoting regional security by degrading transregional and transnational threat networks (T3Ns)," such as those that traffic illegal drugs through Brazil. See, for example, United States Southern Command, Theater Campaign Plan, 2017–2027, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 3 CW3 Phillip W. Fox\*, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 4 April 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 4 CW4 Trent M. Johnson, "Army Special Operations Aviation: Rebalancing the Portfolio with Aviation Foreign Internal Defense," (National Defense University, 2016), makes a similar argument, that tactical victories resulting from improved aviation capacity led to operational successes and advanced U.S. strategic goals.
- 5 Joint Publication 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense, 17 August 2018, <http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/3-0-Operations-Series/>, accessed 26 November 2018; Joint Publication 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense, 12 July 2010, Homeland Security Digital Library, <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=706800>, accessed 26 November 2018. Broadly, foreign internal defense (FID) aims to enhance partners' ability to counter violence and internal instability with limited U.S. support.
- 6 Building partner capacity is most effectively understood as the achievement of U.S. national security through the provision of training and equipment to improve partner nations' ability to execute specific tasks, and self-sustain their capabilities. See: Joint Publication 3-20, Security Cooperation, 23 May 2017, I-2, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Directorship of Building Partnership Capacity, <http://www.dsca.mil/about-us/programs-pgm>, accessed 28 November 2018.
- 7 The 6th SOS traces its lineage to the 6th Fighter Squadron (Commando) during World War II, and was activated at several times, in different forms, to train U.S. and foreign forces in the ensuing decades. In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Act identified FID as a primary special operations activity. As a result, the Air Force Special Operations Command, with the support of USSOCOM, established a dedicated AvFID organization. A successful "proof of concept" deployment to Ecuador in 1992 led to the establishment of Detachment 7, Special Operations Combat Operations Staff, in July 1993. That unit was renamed 6th Special Operations Flight in April 1994, and updated to squadron status that October. See: 6th Special Operations Squadron, Fact Sheet, <https://www.afsoc.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/877958/6th-special-operations-squadron>, accessed 26 November 2018; Department of the Air Force, Special Order GS-33, 25 September 2012, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 CW5 Shawn B. Cutler\*, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 3 April 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) (Ret.) Daniel J. Boonie, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 31 August 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; CW5 (Ret.) William D. Vanderberry, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 8 July 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; CW5 (Ret.) Todd C. Thelin, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 26 June 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. The 617th SOAD was formed out of the remaining Special Forces flight detachments that came together in the late-1980s as the Army's special operations aviation elements gradually coalesced under a single command, reconstituting as the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment in June 1990. Vanderberry referred to these exchanges as "side-FID," while former C Company Commander, LTC (R) Daniel E. Boonie called the engagements "pick-up FID."
- 9 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
- 10 Statement of Garry Reid, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, U.S. Department of Defense, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, 27 April 2010 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), hereafter HASC No. 111-161.
- 11 Colonel Vincent M. Reap, Director, Maritime and Rotary-wing Assessment, U.S. Special Operations Command, HASC No. 111-161; Cutler\*, 3 April 2018; LTC (Ret.) Kirk E. Keepers interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 7 December 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 12 Statement of Garry Reid, HASC No. 111-161, 27 April 2010; The White House, National Security Strategy, May 2010, Homeland Security Digital Library, <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=24251>, accessed 26 November 2018; The White House, Defense Strategic Guidance, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, January 2012); ATP 3-5.02,

- Foreign Internal Defense, August 2015, [https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB\\_ID=105480](https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=105480), accessed 26 November 2018. The U.S. military has trained foreign forces since the nineteenth century. FID became part of national strategy when President John F. Kennedy approved National Security Action Memorandum 182 on August 24, 1962. See: National Security Action Memorandum No. 182, 24 August, 1962, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/ZwPjq2qEu02NamlyfitaA.aspx>, accessed 5 September 2018. FID was first included in Army doctrine in 1976. See: ATP 3-5.02, Foreign Internal Defense, August 2015, [https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB\\_ID=105480](https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=105480), accessed 26 November 2018. FID was increasingly stressed in early-1990s National Security Strategies that sought to balance an expected post-Cold War military drawdown with the decision to use the U.S. military to preserve order across the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The emphasis on such efforts increased along with demands on the armed forces after the terror attacks on 11 September 2001, at the same time the Department of Defense shifted to a capabilities-based model for strategic planning. National Strategic documents from the 1990s are available through the Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense website, under the historical resources tab. See: <https://history.defense.gov/>, accessed 29 October 2018.
- 13 Darrell D. Whitcomb, *On a Steel Horse I Ride: A History of the MH-53 Pave Low Helicopters in War and Peace* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2012), 631–638.
  - 14 Memorandum for Distribution, “SOCOM Resource Decision 2012-001 (Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Tiger Team Results), 8 December 2011, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Department of the Air Force, Special Order GS-33, 25 September 2012, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 15 Email from Patrick O’Hara, U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command Deputy Chief of Staff to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 7 December 2018, hereafter cited by name and date. USASOAC was provisionally activated in 2011, and officially stood up on 1 October 2012.
  - 16 LTC (Ret.) Kirk E. Keepers noted that the 160th first received five MTOE positions for AvFID in 2004. See: Keepers, 7 December 2018.
  - 17 LTC Matthew L. Parker, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 15 November 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; O’Hara, 7 December 2018. Parker was promoted to LTC in January 2018.
  - 18 CW5 (Ret.) Robert X. Villarreal, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 5 March 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Keepers, 7 December 2018. Villarreal was promoted to CW5 on 1 January 2016. He retired in April 2018.
  - 19 Keepers, 7 December 2018; LTC Kirk E. Keepers, “Battalion Commander Inbrief,” undated, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 20 Keepers, 7 December 2018.
  - 21 Keepers, 7 December 2018.
  - 22 Vanderberry, 8 July 2018; Email from William D. Vanderberry to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 27 November 2018.
  - 23 Vanderberry, 8 July 2018; Keepers, 7 December 2018.
  - 24 Vanderberry, 8 July 2018.
  - 25 Vanderberry, 8 July 2018; Email from William D. Vanderberry to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 26 November 2018, hereafter cited by name and date; Villarreal, 5 March 2018.
  - 26 Vanderberry, 8 July 2018; Vanderberry, 26 November 2018.
  - 27 U.S. Army Special Operations Command, ARSOF 2022, Office of Strategic Communication, United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, 2013, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 28 Memorandum for Commander, Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH), Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, “Brazil Rotary-Wing Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE), 5 AUG-9AUG, 2013, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 29 Email from LTC Matthew L. Parker to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 29 November 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 30 Email from LTC Matthew L. Parker to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 16 November 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Parker, 15 November 2018.
  - 31 While much of Latin America and the Caribbean speaks Spanish, Brazil, which includes one-third of the region’s population, is a Portuguese-speaking country.
  - 32 COL Ronald C. Black, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 5 November 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Parker, 15 November 2018. LTC Black was promoted to COL on 1 July 2016.
  - 33 LTC Ronald C. Black to Eugene G. Piasecki, 11 April, 2016, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 34 CW2 Phillip W. Fox\* and CW4 Robert X. Villarreal, Memorandum thru Operations Officer to Commander, 3/160th SOAR (A), “3/160th SOAR (A) Foreign Internal Defense (Aviation) (AvFID) Mission in FY16 and Beyond, 7 August 2014, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; USSOUTHCOM Historical Slide CH1 PowerPoint, 4 June 2015, Copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Full mission profile implies an exercise will encompass the “entire scope of a mission, including planning, rehearsals, infiltration, actions on the objective, and exfiltration.” See: Dr. Jared M. Tracy, “Defense Diplomacy: Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011,” *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 14:2 (2018), 13.
  - 35 The National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy published in 2015 reinforced the strategic emphasis on advancing U.S. interests through partnerships. See: The White House, “National Security Strategy” (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, February 2015); Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The National Military Strategy of the United States of America” (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2015). See also: Johnson, “Army Special Operations Aviation.”
  - 36 SOCSOUTH Mission Guidance Letter, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter SOCSOUTH Mission Guidance Letter.
  - 37 Parker, 15 November 2018.
  - 38 SOCSOUTH Mission Guidance Letter. LTC Keepers emphasized the same point in an oral history interview with the author, noting that he thought it crucial to align language billets with the company expected to conduct AvFID.
  - 39 Villarreal, 5 March 2018; Fox\*, 4 April 2018; 452WHF Pre-PDSS Discussion, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC Brazil Assessment & SMEE CONOP, 5 Jan 2015; JCET 452 WHF Brasilia Brazil PDSS INBRIEF, 8 Jan 2015, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 40 Email from CW3 Phillip W. Fox\* to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 10 September 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 41 Fox\*, 4 April 2018.
  - 42 452WHF Pre-PDSS Discussion; Brazil Assessment & SMEE CONOP, 5 Jan 2015. For information about the *Comando de Operações Especiais*, see the unit’s official webpage: <http://www.copesp.eb.mil.br/index.php/institucional-2>, accessed 22 October 2018.
  - 43 CW3 Phillip W. Fox\*, Olympics 2016: PN Aviation Employment Considerations, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter, Fox\*, “Olympics 2016.”
  - 44 CW4 Robert X. Villarreal and CW2 Phillip W. Fox\*, “3/160th SOAR (A) Irregular Warfare Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Guide,” 9 April 2015, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 45 Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict) Action Memo, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; FY 2006-2016 3-160 Support, Engagement History 2007-today, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; *The Brigada de Operações Especiais is one of the units that comprise the Brazilian Strategic Rapid Reaction Force. See: Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, Knowing Your Partner: The Evolution of Brazilian Special Operations Forces (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2012), 24, 53.*
  - 46 Villarreal, 5 March 2018.
  - 47 Assistant Secretary of Defense (Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict) Action Memo, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; FY 2006-2016 3-160 Support, Engagement History 2007-today, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 48 AAR, FY 2006-2016 3-160 Support, Engagement History 2007-today, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 49 Fox\*, 28 November 2018; CW3 Phillip W. Fox\* interview with Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 29 November 2018.
  - 50 AAR, FY 2006-2016 3-160 Support, Engagement History 2007-today, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
  - 51 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 52 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 53 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 54 Marcelo Guerrante to CW3 Phillip W. Fox\*, “ANAC AAR,” copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter, Guerrante to Fox\*, “ANAC AAR.”
  - 55 SOUTHCOM Traditional Commander Activity [Request], 25 August 2015, copy in USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter, SOUTHCOM TCA Request; Fox\*, 7 March 2018; Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
  - 56 Chief Warrant Officer 5 Robert X. Villarreal, Final Bio, copy in USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 57 Email from Robert X. Villarreal to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 29 November 2018. Villarreal’s award referred to the program as “Building Partner Capacity,” or “BPAC.” While the concept remained the same, the AvFID program was reclassified as BPAC for funding purposes.
  - 58 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
  - 59 SOUTHCOM TCA Request; Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 60 Fox\*, 7 March 2018; Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
  - 61 Guerrante to Fox\*, “ANAC AAR.”
  - 62 Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
  - 63 [Harper Memo, ANNEX M-3-160 PN Air Recommendation Memo (Signed), Olympics Binder], copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
  - 64 SOUTHCOM Traditional Commander Activity, 13 January 2016, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Email from CW5 Shawn B. Cutler to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 6 December 2018.
  - 65 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 66 The quote is from an Email from CW3 Phillip W. Fox\* to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 28 November 2018. CW5 Cutler\* also noted the challenges of intradepartmental politics in Brazil in an oral history interview with the author. See: Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
  - 67 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
  - 68 Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
  - 69 Fox\*, “Olympics 2016.”
  - 70 Fox\*, 7 March 2018; Fox\*, “Olympics 2016.”
  - 71 Fox\*, “Olympics 2016.”
  - 72 Fox\*, 28 November 2018.

- 73 Fox\*, "Olympics 2016."
- 74 Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
- 75 Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
- 76 Fox\*, 7 March 2018.
- 77 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018; [CAVEX SMEE CONOP v7; overall], copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; [BR-19 CAVEX SMEE, 1605 BRA Army Avn Cmd SMEE], copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Email from CW5 Shawn B. Cutler to Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 6 December 2018.
- 78 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018; Sergeant First Class (SFC) Charles C. MacRaven\* interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 8 March 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 79 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018. SFC
- 80 CAVEX SMEE AAR (Draft), copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 81 CW3 Timothy S. Crockett\* interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 8 March 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. **Crockett was promoted to CW4 on 1 June 2018.**
- 82 MacRaven\*, 8 March 2018.
- 83 2016 May 9-13: BPAC SMEE in Taubate, Brazil w/ CAVEX (Comando de Aviação do Exército) [FY 2006-2016 3-160 Support, Engagement History 2007-today], copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; [BR-19 CAVEX SMEE, 1605 BRA Army Avn Cmd SMEE] copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
- 84 CAVEX SMEE AAR (Draft), copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 85 Cutler\*, 3 April 2018.
- 86 O'Hara, 7 December 2018. **In 2016, CW3 Fox\* was asked to escort the SOAAD to Tunisia as the BPAC AOR expanded. Fox\* notes that "it was an exchange of ideas and techniques as we prepared for operations there."** Fox\*, 28 November 2018.
- 87 **While it does not detail specific efforts, the evaluation of Brazil's overall counterterrorism capabilities is drawn from the following report: Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272234.htm#Brazil>, accessed 16 October 2018.**
- 88 Guerrante to Fox\*, "ANAC AAR."
- 89 United States Department of Defense, Summary of the National Defense Strategy of the United States: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge, 2018.
- 90 Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 February 2018.

### 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR's Unique Relationship with U.S. Southern Command Endnotes

- 1 Department of the Army, Permanent Order 67-13, 129th Aviation Company, Unit Activation, 21 April 1986.
- 2 U.S. Army Special Operations Command History Office, "160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment: Historical Handbook," USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, 2017.
- 3 Department of the Army, General Order No. 3, Organizational Actions of Units to Form the 160th Aviation Regiment Under the U.S. Army Regimental System (USARS), 16 January 1988.
- 4 Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones, 1977-1980: The Panama Canal and the Torrijos-Carter Treaties," <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/panama-canal>, accessed 3 December 2018.
- 5 U.S. Southern Command, Command History, 1997-2000, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) (Ret.) Daniel J. Boonie, interview by Dr. Joshua D. Esposito, 31 August 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

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- 1 Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272234.htm#Brazil>, accessed 16 October 2018; Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Title V, Chapter 2, Article 142, <http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2006/teams/willr3/const.htm>, accessed 23 October 2018. For greater detail, see: Alvaro de Souza Pinheiro, *Knowing Your Partner: The Evolution of Brazilian Special Operations Forces* (MacDill Air Force Base: Joint Special Operations University Press, FL, 2012) 21-23, 85.

