

BUILDING EL SALVADOR'S AIRBORNE

PART I

By Charles H. Briscoe



El Salvador, one of the smallest (geographically, the size of Massachusetts) and most densely populated countries in the world, was plagued by organized insurgency for thirteen years during the 1980s and early 1990s. Throughout that conflict Army special operations forces (ARSOF) did an exceptional job, performing a wide variety of foreign internal defense (FID) missions to support U.S. Military Group (MILGP) efforts to help the Salvadoran government fight its counterinsurgency (COIN) war. Professional relationships with the armed forces of Latin America were established by Special Forces (SF) teams in the 1960s, when Communists were fomenting “wars of national liberation” throughout the region.

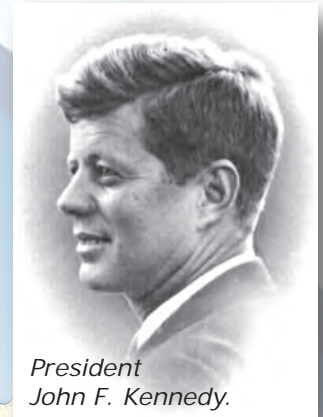
The purpose of this article is to explain the 8th SF Group [Special Action Force Latin America (SAFLA)] mission to provide airborne Ranger infantry training to a select group of Salvadoran officers and sergeants in 1963. These leaders were slated to cadre the first airborne company in the armed forces of El Salvador (ESAF). It proved to be the first COIN training for the Salvadoran military and the airborne Ranger graduates were instrumental in raising the level of professionalism of the ESAF. Some from this original group later commanded with distinction during the thirteen-year war against the rebel FMLN (*Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional*). But, the impact of this specialized training was not realized by the SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) commander at the time.

Captain (CPT) Richard F. Carvell, ODA-3 commander, A Company, 8th Special Forces Group (SFG), 1st Special Forces (SAFLA) had led a MTT (mobile Training Team) to Chile from September through December 1962 to train a Commando force. The commendation letters for that mission had just filtered down to 8th SFG headquarters when Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Arthur D. “Bull” Simons, the group commander, gave Carvell the mission to conduct a Ranger course for a select group of Salvadoran officers and sergeants arriving on 2 May 1963. Training was originally to begin on 6 May. The ODA-3 members scrambled to prepare

a program of instruction (POI), publish a training schedule, and translate lesson plans and handouts into Spanish. The team had to assemble training aids and special equipment, arrange medical support, request ammunition and explosives, transportation, and training areas for the Salvadoran group.¹

The ODA-3 commander had several advantages. As a private, Carvell had received six weeks of Ranger training, the Infantry School standard POI for Airborne Ranger companies during the Korean War and had served in combat with the 1st Airborne Ranger Company. CPT Carvell was just finishing two years as a Lane Instructor (LI) in the Ranger Department (Fort Benning phase) when LTC Simons came recruiting for SF. And, the Chilean Commando course POI in Spanish that he conducted six-months earlier was a compressed version of the nine-week U.S. Army Ranger course.²

The training was part of the Alliance for Progress initiated by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, and followed the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. It was



President
John F. Kennedy.



The United States commemorated the Alliance for Progress in 1963 with a 5 Cent postage stamp.

8th Special Forces Group

Plans to activate a new Special Forces Group in Panama were classified in 1962 with the codename "Project Blue Arrow." A provisional unit, D Company, "the Spanish Company," 7th SFG, Fort Bragg, NC, was formed to be the nucleus of the new 8th SF group that would have two companies assigned, instead of three. The "Spanish Company" of 7th SFG deployed MTTs to Guatemala, Venezuela, and Honduras from Fort Bragg before moving to Panama.

The second element of the advance echelon (ADVON) for Panama included Captains Al Buckalew, Richard Carvell, and Sherry Awtrey, Master Sergeants (MSG) Paul Darcy and Dick Meadows, and Sergeant (SGT) Joe López. They flew to Panama from Pope Air Force Base on 10 July 1962. They were met by Major (MAJ) Johnny Reus-Froylan, First Lieutenant (1LT) James Rougeau, the Assistant S-4 (logistics), and the supply sergeant, Sergeant First Class (SFC) José Ibarra, at Howard Air Base on the Pacific side. The ADVON eventually totaled eleven officers and forty-nine enlisted men.⁵

D Company, 7th SFG was assigned to U.S. Army Caribbean. CPT Carvell became the ADVON officer in charge (OIC) when CPT Buckalew fell sick and had to be hospitalized. The advance party signed for troop billets, temporary housing, and station property (furniture, bedding, and safes), arranged transportation, established the ammunition accounts, evaluated training areas, and looked for drop zones

(DZs).⁶ They were preparing for the main body's arrival by ship in mid-August.

The D Company, 7th SFG commander, MAJ Melvin J. Soward, leading the main body, left Fort Bragg by train on 2 August 1962 headed for New York City to board the USNS *Geiger* in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

After stopping at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, and Guantanamo, Cuba, the *Geiger* docked at Pier 8, Cristobal, Canal Zone, on 11 August 1962. The ADVON met the ship with a variety of vehicles to carry personnel and equipment across the isthmus to Fort Gulick. The 9th Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Battalion and the 146th Engineer, 255th Medical, 3rd Civil Affairs (CA), 550th Military Police, 610th Military Intelligence, and the 401st ASA (Army Security Agency) Special Operations detachments were assigned to form the new Special Action Force Latin America (SAFLA).

LTC John H. Sawyer commanded SAFLA until LTC Arthur D. "Bull" Simons arrived in January 1963. USARCARIB General Order Number 20 activated the 8th SFG on 1 April 1963. A week later, B Company, 8th SFG was activated and the 3rd CA Detachment was reassigned to U.S. Army Forces Southern Command (USARSO), the former USARCARIB headquarters. The 8th SFG signal company became E Company on 14 March 1964.⁷ On 30 June 1972, 8th SFG was deactivated and redesignated 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG.



8th Special Forces
Group Flash

designed to prepare Latin American militaries to combat the rise of Communist-inspired insurgencies in the region and to professionalize their officer and emerging NCO corps. In the initial years of the Alliance, the United States government gave more weight to economic assistance and social reforms than military aid to counter insurgency. Since El Salvador was becoming the dominant economic power in Central America, its military leaders were receptive to training special elements to combat insurgent threats.³

Artillery battery commander CPT José Eduardo Iraheta Castellon had been selected by the *Estado Mayor* (ESAF headquarters) to attend a ten-week COIN course for Latin American officers conducted by U.S. Army Caribbean (USARCARIB) in early 1962. CPT Iraheta had earlier attended a USARCARIB intelligence course in Panama. Coincidentally, CPT Carvell was one of the two SF trainees at the Special Warfare School, Fort Bragg,

NC, sent to attend that same COIN course. Carvell had gone to Spanish language school before reporting for SF training. Afterwards, this USARCARIB course was substituted for the final SF field training exercise (FTX) and Carvell was assigned to D Company, 7th SFG, for a classified assignment [the advance echelon (ADVON) for 8th SFG in Panama]. After CPT Iraheta returned home, he learned that the *Estado Mayor* was seeking volunteers for parachute training at Fort Benning, Georgia.⁴

To CPT Iraheta's good fortune, CPT Edwin G. Scribner, the officer in the U.S. Army Mission, Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG), El Salvador, charged with coordinating the Fort Benning training, was an airborne-qualified artillerymen. He knew CPT Iraheta because the Salvadoran military had only one 105mm artillery battalion. Having just completed the COIN course in Panama, Iraheta had an advantage over three other captain volunteers and was chosen. CPT José Iraheta

was to become El Salvador's first airborne commander. Five lieutenants and eleven sergeants were selected to accompany him to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, for an eight-week English course before beginning parachute training at Fort Benning. CPT Scribner arranged thorough medical examinations, administered a physical training (PT) test, explained the three phases of airborne training, demonstrated the parachute landing fall (PLF), and emphasized the importance of physical fitness. The seventeen Salvadoran soldiers flew to the United States in January 1963.⁸

Airborne School at Fort Benning proved to be quite different than language training. "At Lackland, we did PT by ourselves after class. It was very easy compared to what we had to do in Jump School. We received two weeks of airborne PT every day to get ready, running twice each day, before being assigned to 42nd Company. Our English was very basic. We did not have an interpreter

"...What we tried to do was to keep the toughness in and the non-essentials out,..."

to help us and none of the instructors spoke Spanish. We watched what the other students were doing and imitated them. Two commands, 'Drop and give me ten!' (push-ups) and 'double time' were learned very quickly," chuckled Iraheta. "The 250-foot tower jump during the second week was like a carnival ride. Although all five parachute jumps from a C-119 were during daylight, a few made 'night' jumps (with their eyes closed)."⁹ Still, seventeen Salvadoran soldiers stood very tall in mid-April 1963 when they were awarded Army parachutist badges on Fryar Field.

The next challenges facing these Salvadoran airborne "pathfinders" were Ranger training and parachute rigging. After sightseeing in Atlanta, the Central Americans boarded a commercial flight to Panama. Although foreign military students regularly attended Ranger School, fluency was critical because all instruction and examinations during the nine-week course were given in English. The Infantry School did not think that their language abilities would be sufficient. Unable to dedicate a Spanish-speaking Ranger instructor to assist the Salvadorans, Department of the Army assigned the mission to the 8th SFG in Panama.¹⁰ When the Salvadoran group arrived at Fort Gulick, Panama Canal Zone, five ESAF sergeants (Porrás, Avalos, and three others) were split off to become parachute riggers. They were attached to the 8th SFG rigger detachment. The remaining twelve officers and sergeants were assigned to ODA-3 for Ranger training.¹¹

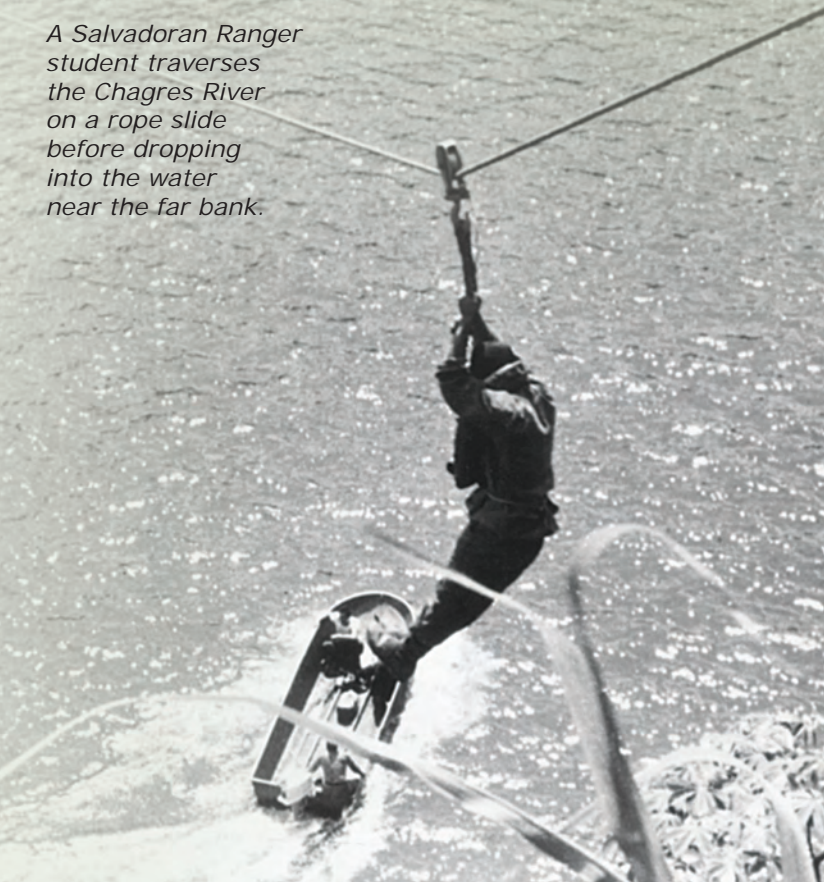
The nine-week U.S. Army Ranger course was compressed to five weeks. It was done by eight instructors training day and night seven days a week, much like CPT

Carvell remembered from his days as a Ranger private in 1951. "The training was by no means watered down. In fact, we gave them a few things that they would not have gotten at Fort Benning, like the exfiltration (escape, survival, and evasion) problem and the airborne drop. What we tried to do was to keep the toughness in and the non-essentials out," said the ODA-3 commander.¹²

The course was divided in half. An instructional phase preceded the practical application in the field. While the Salvadoran students were billeted in the Fort Gulick BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters), they spent most of their time in the field where the vast majority of the training was conducted. Classrooms in the USARCARIB School [predecessor to the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA) and Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Fort Benning today] and the outdoor class sites at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Fort Sherman, were used during the first phase.¹³

The training day started with an hour or two of physical conditioning (PT, hand-to-hand combat, bayonet drills, and speed marches with full combat equipment that progressively grew to 15 kilometers). Ranger tactics and techniques followed refresher training on basic soldier skills and small unit infantry tactics. Map reading and compass work were critical because the day and night compass courses were conducted in dense triple canopy jungle. Rappelling and confidence tests (commando crawl on a rope to cross a river, rope drop, and "slide for life") were done using the steep cliffs along the Chagres River. SF explosives and demolition training was conducted on Banana Island in Gatun Lake.¹⁴ These classes followed a "train the trainer" philosophy and were the building blocks for the field training exercises in the second phase.

A Salvadoran Ranger student traverses the Chagres River on a rope slide before dropping into the water near the far bank.





During survival training Salvadoran Ranger students cooked their dinner over an open fire.



CPT Richard Carvell explains how to inflate the RB-15.



CPT José Eduardo Iraheta and the other Salvadoran Ranger students practice loading the RB-15 aboard a Landing Craft, Medium (LCM) on the shore of Gatun Lake.

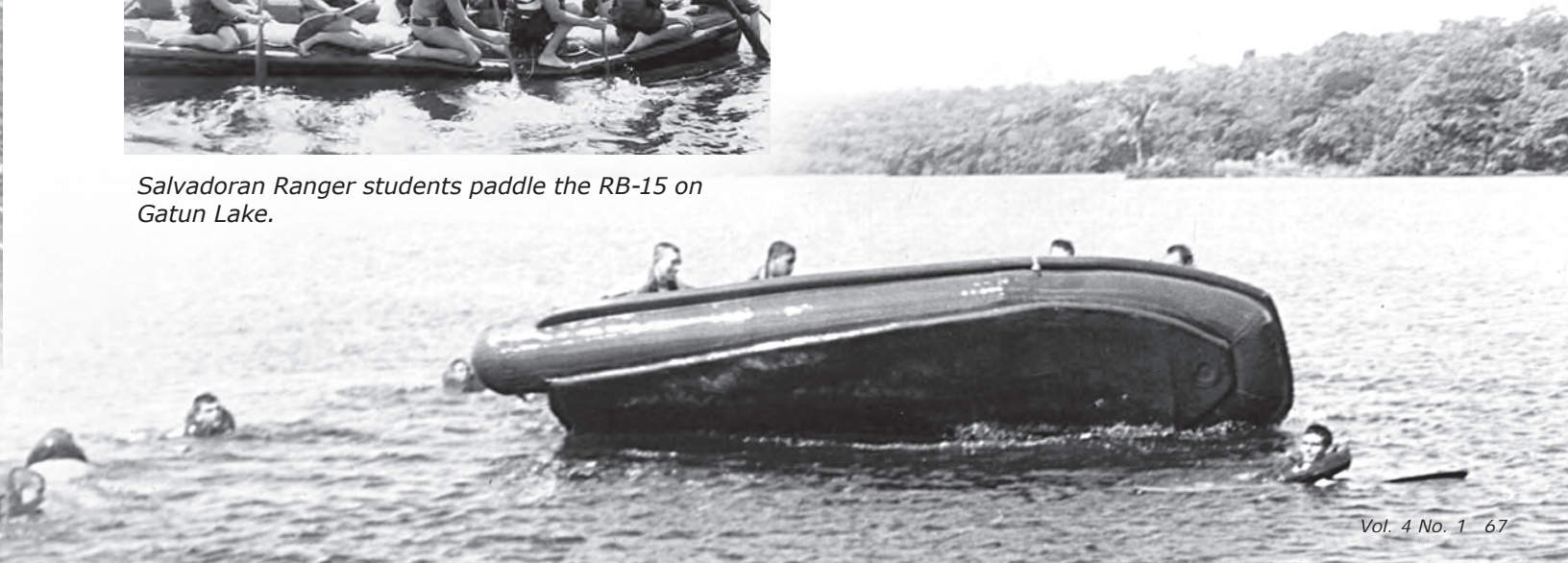


The Salvadoran Ranger students learned the importance of balancing and sharing the RB-15 load during land movement.



Salvadoran Ranger students paddle the RB-15 on Gatun Lake.

The Rangers practice emergency "righting" of the RB-15 in Gatun Lake after it has overturned.





CPT Richard Carvell, ODA-3, served in the 1st Ranger Company during the Korean War.



MSG Pedro "Pete" Sanchez, ODA-3, teaches the proper use of land mines to the Salvadoran Ranger students on Banana Island in Lake Gatun.



Salvadoran Ranger students had some classes in the USARCARIB School at Fort Gulick.





Salvadoran Ranger students practice splinting a broken leg during First Aid training at Fort Gullick.



CPT Richard Carvell (2nd from left) and an ODA-3 NCO with the twelve Salvadoran Ranger students on the first day of training.



USARSO commander, MG T.F. Bogart, visited CPT Richard Carvell and ODA-3 on Banana Island in Gatun Lake where the Salvadorans were receiving Ranger training. CPT Iraheta is at the far left.



MSG Pedro "Pete" Sanchez and another ODA-3 instructor in their tent on the backside of Howard AFB.

Salvadoran Ranger students practice bayonet drills using M-1 Garand rifles with fixed, sheathed bayonets.



Det 3, 1st AC Wing

Detachment 3, 1st Air Commando Group, U.S. Air Force Special Air Warfare Tactical Air Command, was activated at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on 30 April 1962, specifically to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) training in Latin America. Twenty-two officers and forty-eight airmen deployed to Howard Air Force Base, Panama Canal Zone with two C-46 "Commando" transports, two T-28 "Trojan" basic trainers, and two L-28 (later U-10) Super Couriers STOL (short takeoff & landing) liaison aircraft on 15 May 1962 as part of project BOLD VENTURE. Two B-26 (later A-26) "Invader" light bombers were assigned in June to meet the increased 7th Special Forces Group requirements and to provide more capability to train the Latin American air forces. The 1st Air Commando Group was redesignated the 1st Air Commando Wing (ACW) on 1 June 1963. A C-46 (parachute drop on Río Hato) and a B-26 (photo reconnaissance) from Detachment 3, 1st ACW supported the 8th SFG Salvadoran Ranger MTT (May-June 1963). The Air Commando L-28/U-10 "Super Couriers" were used regularly to drop leaflets prepared by the 9th Psychological Warfare Battalion, 8th SFG Special Action Force, Latin America (SAFLA).¹⁶



World War II-era C-46 "Commando" transport.



The T-28 "Trojan," a basic trainer for all U.S. services, was armed with machine-guns and could carry rockets and bombs for close air support (CAS) missions.



The B-26 "Invader," a light bomber, was also used for photo reconnaissance.



The L-28/U-10 "Super Courier," STOL (short takeoff and landing) capable, liaison aircraft was ideal for delivering propaganda leaflets and carrying civic action teams into remote areas of Latin America.

While training the Salvadorans in Ranger day and night tactics and techniques that included survival, fieldcraft, and jungle, mountain, rubber boat, and airborne operations, the MTT provided leader training and strived to qualify them as instructors. All of Phase II was done from their base camp in the Jungle Warfare School training area. Individual shelters were constructed, a cooking area set up, and a small planning facility prepared. All four operations were planned there. The first, rather than the final one, was actually the most complicated.¹⁵

Eleven Salvadoran Ranger students (one sergeant was injured in Phase I) conducted a night parachute assault into the Río Hato training area on the Pacific side of the

isthmus, south of the Canal Zone. During Operation JUST CAUSE in 1989, Río Hato was the 2nd Ranger Battalion objective (General Manuel Noriega's beach house and a *Guardia Nacional* base). The Salvadoran Ranger students and SF cadre established a base on the far side of the Howard Air Force Base runway near the ammunition storage bunkers. In isolation they planned the Río Hato raid mission. A C-46 transport from Detachment 3, 1st Air Commando, supported the mission.

Forty minutes after takeoff the "green light" came on over the Pacific Ocean and the Salvadoran Rangers and their SF instructors jumped out into the darkness. After assembling, the Salvadorans made contact with



Map of Panama with 1963 Salvadoran Ranger training sites highlighted.

a friendly partisan who led them to an “enemy corps artillery headquarters.” Their primary mission was to capture an “enemy general,” so surprise was important. They accomplished that task, but had to fight continuous rearguard actions as they moved their prisoner to an exfiltration site. As they finished setting up lights, the Air Commando transport circling high overhead was called in to extract them. The C-46 swooped down out of the darkness and with the engines running, the Rangers loaded their captive and scrambled in behind him. Mission accomplished.¹⁷

All aspects of the operation went very well. That was amazing since the airborne assault was the “cherry” jump (the first after airborne school) for the Salvadorans. It was their first night jump, their first mass tactical combat equipment jump, their first C-46 aircraft jump, and their first joint operation (with Air Force support).¹⁸ ODA-3 Sergeants Pedro Sanchez (Operations Sergeant), Adrian Rodriguez, and José Garza, commented that the Salvadoran soldiers liked the challenge of Ranger training and were dealing well with the constant pressure. CPT José Iraheta said, “The course was both interesting and thorough.” First Sergeant David José Ulloa declared that “it was the best training they had ever received.”¹⁹ The second operation confirmed those assessments.

This time the Salvadorans were divided into two long-range reconnaissance patrols to observe and collect intelligence on several objectives in the Piña Beach area of Fort Sherman about ten miles away. The recon patrols had to infiltrate the area at night paddling RB-7 rubber assault boats on the rivers. This required skillful water



Salvadoran Ranger students aboard an Air Commando C-46 enroute to Río Hato to raid an aggressor headquarters to capture a senior officer as part of their field training.

navigation, camouflaged concealment of the boats, security, and stealthy approaches and retreats. The SF cadre rotated leadership roles during the various phases of the operation. Both recon patrols accomplished their missions without incident and returned undetected to their base camp.²⁰ It appeared that the Salvadoran Ranger students were “on a roll” until the third exercise.

The mission was to conduct a deliberate daylight ambush of a vehicle convoy along a road. The combat patrol, carrying RB-7 rubber boats, boarded an Army LCM (Landing Craft, Medium) for a night offshore boat



CPT Richard Carvell evaluates the preparations of the Salvadoran Ranger students before their reconnaissance patrols to Piña Beach.



The Salvadoran Ranger students search the ambushed convoy for equipment and documents.



SGT (then CPL) Luís Mariano Turcios (L) poses with his machinegun crew in El Salvador. This is a French produced Hotchkiss M1914 8mm machinegun. LTC Turcios led the ESAF Airborne Battalion for five years and then as a colonel, commanded the 6th Brigade, during the war.

launch. The LCM crew had not practiced this maneuver and they dropped the boat ramp almost 180 degrees. As seawater flooded in threatening to swamp the landing craft, the coxswain standing above them in the stern, immediately threw the boat into reverse, throttled to full power, and frantically pulled up the ramp. The “cargo” (Salvadoran Rangers and SF cadre standing in the bow ready to launch the RB-7s) were tossed “helter skelter” down into a foot of water that covered the cargo compartment deck. That rattled everyone aboard.²¹

After that inauspicious start the operation proceeded. Paddling and navigating an RB-7 in the Caribbean proved to be a major challenge, but the boat crews reached their unloading sites on the beach without being discovered. The rubber boats were quickly hidden in the dense vegetation of the Mandinga mangrove swamps.

“...The Rangers easily slipped away and got back to their boats before sundown.”

The Salvadoran Rangers managed to get into position at the ambush site undetected before daylight. CPT Carvell related, “I purposefully arranged the convoy for late afternoon to increase stress, discomfort from the tropical heat, and cause sleepiness. Still, the ambush was well executed. The Rangers easily slipped away and got back to their boats before sundown.”²² Sergeant Luís Mariano Turcios remembered, “that we let the air out of some vehicle tires before departing and stole the aggressors’ food and cigarettes. It seemed like we were always hungry and short of sleep.”²³

But, this time the “enemy” was waiting and attacked with surprising fury. “We told the Salvadorans to break contact, form two to three-man groups, and evade the “enemy” by navigating overland to their base. This situation change caught the Salvadorans completely by surprise. They were not mentally prepared nor flexible enough to deal with the unexpected,” remembered CPT Carvell. “We spent much of the next day driving the roads of Fort Sherman to round them up. Still, it was a good exercise, a critical lesson, and something that they needed.”²⁴ SGT Luís Mariano Turcios recalled “that this was the toughest part of the course. We spent the afternoon and early evening hiding, then the rest of the night thrashing around in the mangrove swamps. By daybreak we were exhausted, but we could see where we were going.”²⁵

The fourth and last operation, by necessity, was incorporated into the annual 8th SFG FTX (field training exercise) MANDINGA, to share the available support and to have a more realistic Ranger employment scenario. The Salvadoran Ranger student patrols, supported by local guerrilla bands, were to raid specific installations on an uninhabited island off San Blas Point. The idea was



Ranger course graduate SGT Luís Mariano Turcios in dress uniform wearing the U.S. Army and ESAF parachutist badges. The size difference is quite evident.²⁹



The original solid brass El Salvadoran parachute, worn above the left breast uniform pocket and then on a black beret, was about one and half times larger than the US Army parachute badge.



The El Salvadoran Armed Forces created this Comando tab for the Ranger course graduates. The gold and black tab (same colors as the U.S. Army Ranger tab) was to be worn above the unit shoulder insignia.

good, but SFOB (SF Operating Base = 8th SFG headquarters in the field) coordination was poor. Supporting a local MTT training requirement was not a priority and the required LCM was not scheduled. Since the landing craft were based at Rodman Naval Station on the Pacific side, the LCM had to transit the Panama Canal locks and cross Gatun Lake, a several hour procedure.²⁶

A delayed departure time from San Blas Point near Fort Sherman negated a rubber boat approach to the targets (WWII coastal artillery radio towers on *Isla Rosado*) in darkness. Then, the night operation became a daylight raid when the guerrilla beach reception party was not there to safely guide the LCM through the coral reef to the landing site. The Ranger raiding party bobbed offshore until daybreak as the MTT instructors gritted their teeth in frustration. Still, the raiders surprised the enemy guarding the installations on the island, and accomplished their mission without incident.²⁷ CPT Carvell and the Ranger MTT cadre had pushed the Salvadoran officers and sergeants hard for five weeks and they had proved themselves capable.

A formal graduation ceremony was held at the USARCARIB School on 14 June 1963. The eleven Ranger Course graduates were awarded USARCARIB diplomas and everyone received 8th SFG certificates of training. Officer and NCO Ranger Honor Graduates were

presented letters of academic achievement signed by LTC Simons. Class standing was based on a point system that took into account practical examinations, individual PT test scores, peer evaluations, and cadre assessments of field exercise leadership performances. While the U.S. Army Ranger tab was not awarded for the five-week course, Captain Scribner, U.S. Army Mission, MAAG, El Salvador, announced that the ESAF Army was devising an appropriate uniform insignia.²⁸

The Ranger training met the course objectives: develop leadership skills; instill courage and build self-confidence and endurance through tough, physically challenging operations at all hours; demonstrate the advantages of night operations; and provide the necessary skills to enable the Salvadorans to implement Ranger tactics and techniques in their parent organizations.³⁰ This group of airborne "pathfinders" became the nucleus of the premier fighting force in El Salvador. ODA-3 set a high standard of excellence. The Airborne Ranger MTT marked the beginning of a long Special Forces professional relationship with the El Salvadoran armed forces. A second 8th SFG training mission in early 1964, to form and train the first ESAF Airborne Squadron, will be the subject of a future article. ▲

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. He earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina and is a retired Army special operations officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and Colombia.

Endnotes

- 1 Detachment A-3, Company A, 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces (Special Action Force). After Action Report, Subject: After Action Report – Salvadoran Ranger Course, dated 21 June 1963, hereafter cited as Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and retired Colonel Richard F. Carvell, St. Albans, West Virginia, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 17 October 2007, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Carvell Interview and date.
- 2 Carvell Interviews, 16 and 17 October 2007.
- 3 Retired Colonel José Eduardo Iraheta Castellon, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 19 July 2007, San Salvador, El Salvador, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Iraheta Interview and date. **During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the United States military worldwide was placed on DEFCON 1 alert, the highest threat level. Four Special Forces teams (ODAs) from D Company, 7th SFG in Panama joined several CONUS teams in isolation at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Key West, Florida. There, they rehearsed assigned OPLANs (Operation Plan) missions. Central America had been within the range of the Soviet intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM), the SS-4 “Sandal” and SS-5 “Skean” missiles, ostensibly provided to protect communist Cuba from further U.S. attacks.** Retired SGM Doroteo Valdez Flores, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 March 2008, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 4 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, and Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007. **An updated version of this course was used by CPT John D. Waghelstein, 8th SFG, to teach COIN to Bolivian junior officers at the Infantry School in Cochabamba while MAJ Ralph W. “Pappy” Shelton, 8th SFG, was training the Ranger Battalion at Esperanza for its mission against Ché Guevara in 1967. Waghelstein was serving as an advisor to the Bolivian Army airborne battalion at Cochabamba.** Retired Colonel John D. Waghelstein, Bristol, Rhode Island, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 June 2007, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 Retired CSM Joe López, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 25 February 2008, El Paso, TX, digital recording, hereafter cited by name and date, and HQ, US Army Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, NC, LO 7-198, SUBJECT: Movement-PCS of Org/Unit, dated 5 July 1962, copies in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 Carvell Interview, 16 October 2007 and 8th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces. *1970 Historical Supplement. Special Action Force Latin America*, 7, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as SAFLAN 1970.
- 7 HQ, U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, LO 7-198, SUBJECT: Movement-PCS of Org/Unit dated 5 July 1962, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and SAFLAN 1970, 7.
- 8 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007.
- 9 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007.
- 10 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007, Retired COL Luis Mariano Turcios, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 December 2007, San Salvador, El Salvador, digital recording, hereafter cited by name and date, and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 11 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007 and Carvell interviews, 17 October 2007 and 22 February 2008. **The members of ODA-3 for the Salvadoran Ranger Training MTT were: CPT Richard F. Carvell, MSG Pedro Sanchez, SFCs Doroteo V. Flores, Nelson Moore, and Adrian Rodriguez, SSGs Harry Boyle and Eldridge Gilliken, and SGTs Rafael Zamarripa and Jose Garza. They were assisted by 1LT Dan Smith, SSGs Ruben Michel and Miguel Lopez, and SGT David Capion.** Carvell emails to Briscoe, 23 & 27 February 2008, Subject: Answers to Questions, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 12 “Salvadoran Troops First Latin Americans To Go Through Ranger Training In Zone,” undated news article (June 1963), U.S. Army Forces Southern Command newspaper, *The Buccaneer*, and “Examen Práctico de Comandos,” undated news article (June 1963) in *Bucanero*, the Spanish language version of *The Buccaneer*, copies in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 13 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 14 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, Carvell Interviews, 16 October 2007 and 22 February 2008, and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 15 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 16 U.S. Air Force. TSgt Robert J. O’Neil. *Special Air Warfare Center History*, 27 April – 31 December 1962 (Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 1963): 209-210.
- 17 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR, Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, and “First L.A. Students Take Ranger Training,” undated article, USARCARIB newspaper, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Following 8th SFG standing operating procedures (SOP), the Salvadoran Ranger students jumped their M-1 Garand rifles and M-2 Carbines exposed. M1919A6 .30 cal light machineguns were carried in weapons containers. Radios were well-padded and jumped inside kit bags. Static line extensions were used for jumping the C-46.** Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 18 Carvell Interview, 16 October 2007. **ODA-3 SFC Doroteo Valdez Flores landed hard on the Río Hato concrete runway, injuring his back. He spent a few days at Gorgas Hospital after the operation.** Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 19 “Salvadoran Troops First Latin Americans To Go Through Ranger Training In Zone” and “Examen Práctico de Comandos.”
- 20 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007.
- 21 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 22 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 23 Turcios Interview, 12 December 2007. **SGT Luis Mariano Turcios later commanded the ESAF Airborne Squadron, oversaw its expansion to a battalion in 1983, and commanded it until 1988.**
- 24 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007.
- 25 Turcios Interview, 12 December 2007.
- 26 **In the midst of the training the Ranger MTT members were required to stand the annual IG (Inspector General) Inspection and pull staff duty.** Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 27 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and Carvell Interview, 16 October 2007.
- 28 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR. **The shoulder insignia adopted was a Comando tab.**
- 29 Eric Micheletti. *World Elite Forces* (France: MBI Publishing, 1993): 144.
- 30 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.

CPT Richard Carvell's copy of the Salvadoran Ranger Course After Action Report dated 21 June 1963.

