7TH INFANTRY DIVISION (LIGHT)

JUST CAUSE
20 DEC 89 - 30 JAN 90
LIGHTFIGHTER!
TASK ORGANIZATION

TF ATLANTIC (3D BDE):
-- HHC, 3d Bde
-- 4-17 Infantry Battalion
-- 3-17 Infantry Battalion (CMO Phase only)
-- 3/504 PIR (82d ABN Div)
-- B/7-15 Field Artillery
-- Forward Area Support Team (FAST) III
-- C/13 Engr (+)
-- Team A/107 MI
-- 3/B/127 SIG
-- 2/7 MP Co
-- Div PM Cell

2ND BDE:
-- HHC, 2d Bde
-- 5-21 Infantry Battalion
-- 2-27 Infantry Battalion
-- 3-27 Infantry Battalion
-- B/13 Engr (+)
-- FAST II (-)
-- Team B/107 MI
-- B/6-8 FA
-- 3/7 MP Co (-)
-- 2/B/127 SIG (-)

9TH REGIMENT (Attached to 82D ABN DIV):
-- HHC, 9th Regiment
-- 1-9 Infantry Battalion
-- 2-9 Infantry Battalion
-- 3-9 Infantry Battalion
-- A/13 Engr
-- FAST I (-)
-- Team H/107 MI
-- 1/B/127 SIG

Aviation Assets (Attached to TF Aviation):
-- HHC 7ID(L) Avn Bde
-- 1-123 Avn (-)
-- 3-123 Avn (-)

Division Troops:
-- HHC, 7th Infantry Division
-- HHC, 127th Signal Battalion, (-)
-- 1/A/127 SIG
-- DISCOM (-)
-- 1/7 MP CO
-- AT Plt/2-27 IN
-- B/3-27 IN (-)

Jody Gutierrez  CCO/HHC/NASTY BRAVO  4/17  7th ID (c)
THIS IS DEDICATED TO ALL OF THE SOLDIERS AND THE FAMILIES WHO PARTICIPATED EITHER AS A PART OF THE FORCE THAT DEPLOYED TO PANAMA OR SUPPORTED US FROM FORT ORD DURING "JUST CAUSE". GOD BLESS YOU ALL.
INTRODUCTION

THIS IS BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE DOCUMENT OR AFTER ACTION REPORT ON "JUST CAUSE". THIS IS ONLY MEANT TO SHOW A SMALL PART OF THE EFFORTS THAT SOME OF THE LIGHTFIGHTERS FROM THIS DIVISION PUT FORTH. MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I DID NOT HAVE MORE PHOTOS. A SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO ALLOWED ME TO USE THEIR PHOTOS IN ORDER TO SHOW PEOPLE HOW GOOD OUR SOLDIERS ARE. A SPECIAL THANKS TO J. ANDREW MALCOLM FOR HIS PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE. MOST OF THE PHOTOS ARE UNCAPTIONED AND I'LL LET YOU SEARCH FOR YOUR FRIENDS IN THE BACKGROUND. THESE PICTURES, HOWEVER, CANNOT POSSIBLY CONVEY THE THANKS THAT THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE HAVE FOR YOUR GREAT EFFORT. ALTHOUGH THE HOURS WERE LONG, THE HEAT AND HUMIDITY MISERABLE, THE ATTITUDE AND SMILES ON THE FACE OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. MANY FAMILIES SPENT THEIR FIRST CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEARS APART FROM EACH OTHER DURING "JUST CAUSE". IT WAS NOT EASY ON THE FAMILIES OR THE SOLDIER. FOR MANY FAMILIES, THE TELEVISION BECAME AN HOURLY PART OF THEIR LIVES AS THEY WATCHED BUILDINGS IN PANAMA BURN. A SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO THOSE WHO WATCHED AND PRAYED FOR OUR SOLDIERS. "JUST CAUSE" WAS ALSO THE FIRST TIME SINCE VIETNAM, THAT A DIVISION WITH ALL THREE COMBAT BRIGADES AND A LARGE PORTION OF THE AVIATION, COMBAT SUPPORT AND COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT HAS BEEN DEPLOYED TO SUPPORT AN OPERATION. I AM PROUD TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF OPERATION "JUST CAUSE" AND PROUD TO HAVE SERVED WITH A GREAT BUNCH OF LIGHTFIGHTERS!

ML
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THE DICTATOR

IT SHOULD COME AS NO GREAT SURPRISE THAT THE HEAVIEST FIGHTING EXPERIENCED DURING "JUST CAUSE" OCCURRED IN THE SAME VICINITY THAT MANUEL ANTONIO NORIEGA WAS BORN AND RAISED. NORIEGA WAS BORN IN THE SLUMS OF PANAMA CITY IN 1934 AND NEVER KNEW HIS MOTHER AND THEREFORE WAS RAISED BY HIS OLDER HOMOSEXUAL BROTHER, LUIS CARLOS. AS A YOUTH HE HAD DEEP SCARRING ACNE THUS THE NICKNAME "PINEAPPLE FACE". AFTER ATTENDING SCHOOL IN PERU ON A MILITARY ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP THAT WAS AWARDED TO HIM BY HIS BROTHER, NORIEGA RETURNED TO JOIN THE RANKS OF THE PANAMANIAN NATIONAL GUARD AND BEGIN HIS RISE TO THE TOP. NORIEGA ROSE THROUGH THE RANKS IN THE PDF, WHILE RIDING ON THE POWERFUL COATTAILS OF THE HEAD OF THE PANAMANIAN ARMY, GENERAL OMAR TORRJOS. THE MONEY AND POWER QUICKLY BECAME NORIEGA’S DRUG OF CHOICE. TORRJOS APPOINTED NORIEGA TO BE THE PDF G-2 WHICH BECAME THE MOST POWERFUL POSITION IN THE ARMY. GENERAL TORRJOS WAS KILLED IN 1981 IN A FIERY PLANE CRASH WHICH WAS LATER REPORTED TO BE AN ASSASSINATION SET UP BY NORIEGA. IT THEN TOOK LTC NORIEGA ONLY TWO YEARS TO PROMOTE HIMSELF TO GENERAL AND ASSUME COMMAND OF THE PDF IN AUGUST, 1983. IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT U.S. FEDERAL INDICTMENTS STATE THAT NORIEGA BEGAN ASSISTING THE DRUG CARTELS, BY LAUNDERING DRUG MONEY AND ASSISTING IN IMPORTING 400,000 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA INTO THE UNITED STATES. PAYMENTS IN THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WERE PAID TO THE PDF AND NORIEGA FOR ASSISTING IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF THE DRUGS.

THIS DID NOT SIT WELL WITH THE PDF SOLDIERS AND IN JUNE 1987, NORIEGA’S CHIEF OF STAFF, COLONEL ROBERTO DIAZ HERRERA, WENT PUBLIC AND MADE DAMAGING STATEMENTS AGAINST NORIEGA CONCERNING CORRUPTION AND NORIEGAS INVOLVEMENT IN THE "ASSASSINATION" OF TORRJOS. BY THIS TIME NORIEGA HAD AMASSED A FORTUNE. HIS PERSONAL HELICOPTER, BOEING 727, LEAR JET, YACHTS NAMED MACHO I, II AND III, LUXURIOUS HOMES IN THE BEST PART OF PANAMA CITY, A BEACH RESORT IN RIO HATO, A MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE NEAR DAVID, A FARM IN FRANCE AND LUXURY APARTMENTS AND FURNISHINGS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WERE ONLY A PART OF HIS WEALTH. IN 1987 HE AWARDED HIMSELF THE "EAGLE MEDAL" WHICH WAS WORTH OVER $85,000 IN GOLD AND JEWELS. IN JULY 1987, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT NORIEGA SIGNED AFTER THE DEATH OF TORRJOS, NORIEGA SHOULD HAVE RETIRED. HE DID NOT.

IN FEBRUARY 1988, THE PRESIDENT OF PANAMA RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM AND DELVALLE ATTEMPTED TO FIRE NORIEGA. NORIEGA TURNED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HAD THE PRESIDENT IMPEACHED. THEREFORE CONSOLIDATING HIS POWER AND DICTATORSHIP OVER THE COUNTRY OF PANAMA. IN MARCH 1988, HIS OFFICERS ATTEMPTED THE FIRST COUP TO OVERTHROW NORIEGA BUT FAILED AND THE LEADERS WERE EITHER KILLED OR IMPRISONED. IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A FACADE OF NORMALCY NORIEGA
THEN CALLED FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. HE HAD APPOINTED SOLIS PALMA AS THE ACTING HEAD OF STATE AND WHEN DURING THE MAY 1989 ELECTIONS HE DISCOVERED HIS CANDIDATE WAS LOSING REGARDLESS OF HIS ATTEMPTS TO STUFF THE BALLOT BOXES, HE PUT DOWN THE OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATIONS WITH BRUTE FORCE AND DECLARED THE ELECTIONS NULL AND VOID. ON 1 SEPTEMBER WHEN THE PRESIDENT'S TERM EXPIRED NORIEGA SIMPLY APPOINTED HIS AGRICULTURAL MINISTER, RODRIGUEZ, TO BE HIS PUPPET.

NORIEGA AND WIFE FELICIDAD. HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS HAVE SOUGHT ASYLUM.
05 APRIL 1988: THE JCS COMMITS 7ID(L) AVIATION ASSETS TO ASSIST THE IN COUNTRY UNITS AS A PART OF "ELABORATE MAZE". TASK FORCE HAWK IS FORMED AND IS STATIONED AT FORT KOBBE.

15 MAY 1989: THE JCS AGAIN DIRECTS ADDITIONAL 7ID(L) TROOPS TO BE DEPLOYED TO PANAMA AS A PART OF "NIMROD DANCER". TASK FORCE MANCHU IS STATIONED AT FORT SHERMAN. THEIR MISSION IS TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF U.S. CITIZENS WHO LIVE IN THE CANAL ZONE.

JUNE-OCTOBER: VIOLENT ACTS DIRECTED TOWARDS U.S. SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES CONTINUE TO INCREASE. MANY PEOPLE ARE OPENLY HARRASSED BY THE PANAMANIAN DEFENSE FORCES (PDF) AND DIGNITY BATTALIONS. DEPENDENTS BEGIN TO MOVE ONTO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OR LEAVE COUNTRY.

05 OCTOBER: ANOTHER ATTEMPT IS MADE BY THE PDF OFFICERS TO OVERTHROW NORIEGA. IT IS VIOLENTLY PUT DOWN AND THE LEADERS ARE EITHER KILLED OR IMPRISONED.

16 DECEMBER: AN UNARMED U.S. MARINE LIEUTENANT IS SHOT AND KILLED BY THE PDF AFTER BEING STOPPED AT A PDF ROADBLOCK. ANOTHER U.S. SERVICEMAN AND HIS WIFE ARE DETAINED AND BEATEN BY THE PDF AFTER BEING STOPPED AT THE SAME ROADBLOCK IN DOWNTOWN PANAMA.

19 DECEMBER: 7ID(L) IS ALERTED AND DEPLOYS TO PANAMA.

20 DECEMBER: OPERATION "JUST CAUSE" COMMENCES AT 0100 HOURS.

3RD BRIGADE, WHICH IS ALREADY IN COUNTRY AND IN POSITION, TAKES DOWN AND IMMEDIATELY SECURES ALL TARGETS IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE CANAL ZONE.

TASK FORCE HAWK, WHICH FALLS UNDER THE COMMAND AND CONTROL OF TASK FORCE AVIATION, COMMENCES OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CANAL ZONE IN SUPPORT OF ALL GROUND FORCES.
7ID(L) TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER ARRIVES AND ESTABLISHES OPERATIONS AT ALLBROOK AFB.

2ND BRIGADE ARRIVES AND CONDUCTS SECURITY MISSION AT TOCUMEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

22 DECEMBER: 2ND BRIGADE BEGINS OPERATIONS TO THE WEST OF THE CANAL ZONE AND CONTINUES TO THE COSTA RICAN BORDER WHILE OPERATING IN SIX MILITARY ZONES.

23 DECEMBER: 9TH REGIMENT ARRIVES AND PREPARES TO MOVE INTO PANAMA CITY TO ASSIST THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION IN CLEARING THE CITY OF PDF, SNIPERS AND LOOTERS.

3RD BRIGADE COMPLETES MOPPING UP OPERATIONS IN COLON, PANAMA’S SECOND LARGEST CITY, AND CONTINUES CIVIL MILITARY OPERATIONS.

25 DECEMBER: THE 7ID(L) SPENDS A CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME.

30 DECEMBER: 2ND BRIGADE CONDUCTS OPERATIONS OVER 14,000 SQUARE MILES, USING TASK FORCE AVIATION ASSETS, NOW NAMED TASK FORCE CONDOR. THEY CONDUCT AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS FROM THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY, TO THE COUNTRY’S PENAL COLONY IN THE PACIFIC.

31 DECEMBER: 3RD BRIGADE BEGINS OPERATIONS TO THE EAST OF COLON ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST. TASK FORCE AVIATION SUPPORTS THE OPERATIONS.

DISCOM CONTINUES SUPPORT OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND BEGINS TO RECEIVE AND CRATE UP TONS OF CAPTURED ARMS AND AMMUNITION.

1 JANUARY: LIGHTFIGHTERS SPEND NEW YEARS AWAY FROM HOME.

TRANSISTHMIAN HIGHWAY BETWEEN COLON AND PANAMA CITY IS OPENED AND MPS BEGIN CONVOY ESCORT.

1-7 JANUARY: 2ND BRIGADE HAS CLEARED OVER 100 TOWNS THROUGHOUT WESTERN PANAMA.

3RD BRIGADE HAS COMPLETED THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN COLON.

9TH HAS REESTABLISHED NORMALITY IN THE STREETS OF PANAMA CITY AND THE SHOPPERS ARE OUT IN FORCE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. CURFEWS ARE BEING ENFORCED DURING HOURS OF DARKNESS.
THE DTAC IS MOVED TO FORT AMADOR.

COMBINED U.S. AND PANAMANIAN PUBLIC FORCES (PPF) PATROLS BEGIN IN ALL AREAS.

9 JANUARY: 7ID(L) CONDUCTS THE RELIEF IN PLACE OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION.

9TH REGIMENT BEGINS REDEPLOYMENT.

2ND BRIGADE MOVES INTO PANAMA CITY.

12 JANUARY: CDR, 7ID(L) AND SELECTED STAFF ASSUME THE MISSION AS JTF-PANAMA AND ARE HEADQUARTERED AT FORT CLAYTON.

15 JANUARY: DISCOM HAS SHIPPED OVER 20,000 WEAPONS AND 50,000 PIECES OF CAPTURED HARDWARE TO THE U.S. FOR INVENTORY.

21 JANUARY: 9TH REGIMENT COMPLETES REDEPLOYMENT.

30 JANUARY: 2ND BRIGADE EXPANDS THEIR AREA OF OPERATION AND BEGINS ROAD AND AIR MOVEMENT TO THE COLUMBIAN BORDER.

OPERATION "JUST CAUSE" ENDS SUCCESSFULLY.

31 JANUARY: OPERATION "PROMOTE LIBERTY" BEGINS.

REDEPLOYMENT OF 3RD BRIGADE IS COMPLETE.

4 FEBRUARY: 7ID(L) DTAC REDEPLYS TO FORT ORD.
ENEMY FORCES

PDF COUNTER-TERRORIST SQUAD (UESAT). PROBABLY THE MOST HIGHLY TRAINED UNIT IN THE PDF.
PDF NAVAL CRAFT OPERATING IN THE CANAL AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPON (ZPU-4).
PDF SOLDIERS AND UH-1N HUEY AIRCRAFT FLYING OVER PANAMA CITY.
HOME OF THE "MOUNTAIN MEN" 7TH INFANTRY COMPANY AT RIO HATO.

ANTI-US PROPAGANDA AT RIO HATO. NOTE THE EAGLE AND FLAG.
ANTI-AMERICAN GRAFFITI ONE MONTH PRIOR TO JUST CAUSE.

PANAMA, PAIS MILITARMENTE OCUPADO POR USA
GATUN LOCKS AT THE NORTH END OF THE CANAL ARE AN IMPORTANT KEY TO KEEPING THE CANAL OPEN. 3RD BRIGADE WAS CRITICAL IN THEIR DEFENSE AGAINST ATTACK OR SABOTAGE.
BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS AND MADDEN DAM WERE BOTH KEY DEFENSE SITES ON 20 DECEMBER.
GARRISON LOCATION OF PDF 1ST INFANTRY COMPANY AT TINIJITAS. NOTE THE .50 CAL MACHINE GUN POSITION AT THE LOWER LEFT OF THE BOTTOM PHOTO. TASK FORCE AVIATION FLEW THE MISSION TO CAPTURE THE SITE, ON 20 DECEMBER.
PDF NAVAL INFANTRY COMPANY DOCKS AT COCO SOLO IN THE VICINITY OF COLON.

FORT ESPÍNAR, GARRISON LOCATION OF THE PDF 8TH INFANTRY COMPANY.
NORIEGA'S HEADQUARTERS AT "LA COMMANDANCIA". BEFORE AND ......... AFTER.
OPERATION NIMROD DANCER
MAY-DEC 1989

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT CONVOY
LIGH'TFIGHTERS DEPART TRAVIS AFB AND ARRIVE HOURS LATER IN PANAMA AT HOWARD.
AVIATION OPERATIONS IN COLON AND DEFENSIVE POSITION AT ALLBROOK AFB.
LONG HOURS FACE A LIGHTFIGHTER.

SPC HOYLE AT THE READY IN PANAMA CITY
PATROLS AND DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN COLON.
3/9 Infantry Battalion Light Fighters prepare for and move out during night operations in the slums of Panama City.
LIGHTFIGHTERS ON PATROL
A SHAKEDOWN AND TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS BY 3RD BRIGADE.
PREPARING FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS AT RIO HATO.
CAPTURED V-150 APC AND LIGHT FIGHTERS PREPARING FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, GEN VUONO AND LTC WEBB, TASK FORCE AVIATION, DISCUSS OPERATIONS.

TASK FORCE AVIATION DOOR GUNNER AT THE READY.
DANGEROUS NIGHT OPERATIONS.
3RD BRIGADE CONDUCTS SCREENING OPERATIONS WHILE RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN COLON.
3RD BRIGADE OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN COLON.
COMBINED PATROLS BECOME THE BACKBONE OF NATION BUILDING
LIGHTFIGHTER TAKES A BREAK AT LOCAL ESTABLISHMENT.

PRISONERS WERE HELD AT THE CENTRAL EPW FACILITY AT EMPIRE RANGE WHICH WAS NEXT TO THE PANAMA CANAL.
HOT T-RATIONS AND TAKING A BREAK.
LITERALLY TONS OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION WERE FOUND AND SHIPPED BACK TO THE U.S. BY THE 7ID (L). THE WEAPONS INCLUDED ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS, ANTI-TANK WEAPONS AND THOUSANDS OF COMMUNIST MADE AK-47S.
CAPTURED WEAPONS AND HOMEMADE BOMB TRAINING FACILITY AT THE AIRPORT IN DAVID.
NORIEGA'S BACKYARD IN RIO HATO...

...HIS AIRPORT AT PATTILA...

...AND SPECIAL WEAPONS.
OPERATIONS BRIEF TO GEN VUONO AND AWARDS TO LIGHTFIGHTERS.
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, MR. CHENEY MEETS WITH LIGHTFIGHTERS AND PRESENTS AWARDS AT RIO HATO.
VICE PRESIDENT QUAYLE AND CINCSOUTH, GEN THURMAN DISCUSS OPERATIONS WITH LIGHTFIGHTERS ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY.
GEN VUONO CONGRATULATES LIGHTFIGHTER AVIATOR!
JUNGLE OPERATIONS TRAINING COMMAND (JOTC) CADRE RECEIVE CIBS AND AWARDS THEY SERVED WHILE OPCON TO 3D BDE (TASK FORCE ATLANTIC).
REENLISTMENTS AND MORE AWARDS!
LIGHTFIGHTERS BID FAREWELL TO PANAMA AND RETURN HOME!
THANKFUL PANAMANIANS!
WELCOME HOME LIGHTFIGHTERS!

AND UNDERNEATH, PUT A SKULL AND CROSSBONES WITH AN AMERICAN FLAG... AND UNDER THAT, PUT "BORN TO KICK BUTT!"
IN MEMORY

OF THOSE
LIGHTFIGHTERS WHO
LOST THEIR LIVES DURING
"JUST CAUSE"
20 DECEMBER 1989 - 30 JANUARY 1990

CW2 ANDREW P. PORTER, COMPANY B, 1/123 AVN BN
SGT WILLIAM D. GIBBS, COMPANY C, 4/17 INF BN
SPC DOUGLAS J. DUFF, COMPANY A, 1/9 INF BN
PFC ANTHONY PETTIGNANO, COMPANY B, 3/27 INF BN