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## 2016-03-18 | **Military (/en\_GB/keywords/topic/military)** | **Honduran and U.S. Marines Conduct Joint Training to Bolster Defenses**



A Honduran Marine participates in sea survival training conducted by Honduran Navy officers and a team of U.S. Marines at the Naval Training Center at the Trujillo Colón Base in Puerto Castilla. [Photo: SEDENA]

### **Julieta Pelcastre**

The Honduran Naval Force (FNH) is training with Soldiers from U.S. Marine Forces South (MARFORSOUTH), the Marine component of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), in an effort to fortify the Central American country's sea, air, and land shields against drug trafficking and organized crime. The six-month program, which focuses on survival tactics, water combat, martial arts, and first aid for those wounded in combat, is being held at the Naval Training Center (CAN) at Trujillo Colón Base in Puerto Castilla and will last until the end of August.

Five officers and 13 non-commissioned officers are taking the Specialized Course for Marines, which is taught by the

11 FNH officers who completed a MARFORSOUTH course in fighting narco-trafficking and organized crime in September 2015. “These young men and women will be the first FNH Marines to graduate after being taught by their Honduran colleagues, under the supervision of United States Marines,” explained Captain Álvaro Reyes, CAN director, in an interview with *Diálogo* .

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The United States has the doctrine and the courses. We have adapted the training to our real-life circumstances... The training is focused on combating drug trafficking and urban operations because in our country, the big threat is from the scourge of drug trafficking.”

The FNH service members participating in the training are between the ages of 20 and 25. The FNH training officers are working in cooperation with four officers and a physician from the U.S. Marine Corps, under the command of First Lieutenant David Lemelin, MARFORSOUTH.

“We are committed to ensuring that our Marines are adequately prepared to provide effective support to our Honduran counterparts,” 1st Lt. Lemelin said. “Cooperation in security with our Honduran partners is mutually beneficial. Together, we are perfecting our abilities. Our continuing association could constitute an essential part of the solution to the problem of transnational drug trafficking, keeping in mind adequate resources, training, and intrinsic motivation and dedication we have seen in Honduras’s Marines.”

Capt. Reyes added that "SOUTHCOM [MARFORSOUTH] requires our instructors do their jobs correctly, as they were taught. In some classes, they provide us support as auxiliary instructors. They are letting us conduct the training.”

In survival tactic training, for example, participants are taught to work as a team in the event of an emergency on board the ship, or if they must abandon the vessel. “In this survival training, the participants have developed the ability to float with their team, link up, and stay together until they arrive at a safe place,” Capt. Reyes stated.

In water combat instruction, the FNH service members are training to repel drug traffickers in a variety of ways while evading enemy fire. They practice with small boats and rubber rafts.

At the end of the course, the Honduran instructors provide first aid training. “Youths in the FNH will develop the ability to protect their entire team,” Capt. Reyes said. “In the event of wounded or casualties, the victim will receive aid until they arrive at a safe place where they are not in danger of an attack.”

## **Leadership skills**

In addition to tactical and physical training, FNH officers are teaching map reading, ground navigation, and leadership skills to the young service members. The FNH instructors are training their young colleagues to make quick, timely decisions during Military operations.

Strong, decisive leadership is crucial during moments when FNH service members are suddenly confronted with dangerous situations. “In Honduras, our challenges are very similar to terrorism because we don’t know whether some drug traffickers might suddenly fire an RPG 7 grenade launcher at us, as it happened in October 2015, when we repelled the attack and captured some of them,” Capt. Reyes stated.

This incident occurred during a drug enforcement operation in the Caribbean Sea, when a gang of narcotraffickers attacked the FNH in the middle of the night between the communities of Cusuna and Iriona in the department of Colón, the Honduran newspaper *El Heraldo* reported.

The narcotraffickers, who were traveling on a go-fast boat and carrying high-powered firearms, wounded three service members during the firefight that ended with the FNH capturing four suspects and seizing the Russian-made RPG grenade launcher.

The continual training of the FNH's personnel has borne fruit in the Armed Forces' battle against

drug trafficking. The FNH has seized more than 13,000 kilograms of cocaine during the last two years, the Secretariat of the National Defense (SEDENA) reported on February 19th. SEDENA deploys the FNH on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts to prevent narco-trafficking groups and transnational criminal organizations from using the country as a transshipment point for cocaine and precursor chemicals for manufacturing synthetic drugs.

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**2016-03-18**

**[During the Olympics in Brazil this August, the leaders of Military delegations from 100 participating countries will have the opportunity to socialize and share their experiences at the International Military Sports Council Club on the grounds of the Air Force University.](http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/18/feature-02)**

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**[Brazil Reconstructs Base in Antarctica](/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/16/feature-02)**

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**2016-03-16**

**[Brazil's Ministry of Defense is rebuilding the Comandante Ferraz Antarctic Station, which was nearly destroyed by a fire in 2012. The new facilities will include 17 research](#)**

was partly destroyed by a fire in 2012. The new facilities will include 17 research laboratories. ([http://dialogo-americas.com/en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/16/feature-02](http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/16/feature-02))



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## **New Salvadoran Troop Contingent Joins Peacekeeping Mission in Lebanon ([en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/14/feature-04](http://en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/14/feature-04))**

**2016-03-14**

Salvadoran Troops are joining the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to help maintain the ceasefire agreement along the border between Lebanon and Israel, as well as provide humanitarian assistance for the victims of the conflict. ([http://dialogo-americas.com/en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/14/feature-04](http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2016/03/14/feature-04))

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