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## United States Southern Command, SOUTHCOM

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# United States Southern Command, SOUTHCOM

**SOUTHCOM has humanitarian demining programs in several Central American countries. With help from the OAS, SOUTHCOM is able to make progress in helping this area become mine free.**

by MAIC

*This article is based on Mr. Scott Getter's presentation from the Military Contributions to Humanitarian Demining Conference held in Tampa, Florida, in January 2001. Mr. Getter is the Program Manager for Humanitarian Demining operations at CINC South.*

### Background

SOUTHCOM uses the US Army Special Operations Force (SOF) to conduct humanitarian demining. It is fortunate to be able to provide support in Central America, Peru and Ecuador through a regional organization, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB). These organizations assist in developing self-sustaining humanitarian demining programs. SOUTHCOM has supported OAS/IADB in Latin America since 1995.

### Promoting Mine Awareness

In 1998, SOUTHCOM started a humanitarian demining program in support of the Peru/Ecuador peace accords. Missions are task organized using SOF and integrating Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) into missions starting this year.

The Psychological Operations (PSYOP) detachment provides mine

awareness programs using surveys to determine the best way to distribute the information. This program has used standard mine awareness signs, as well as posters, Superman comics, printed t-shirts and school supplies to promote mine awareness. The detachment will be conducting post-tests of the program's effectiveness.

international supervisors, the Mission of Assistance for the Removal of Mines in Central America (MARMINCA) located in Managua, which coordinates all training in Central America.

*Guatemala* has primarily a UXO problem, which will require another 6-8 years for removal. Volunteer firemen, working in coordination with the military, bring credibility to the team.

*Costa Rica* has a small mine problem that will require up to two years to complete.

Operations in *Ecuador and Peru* are focused along a 78-kilometer stretch of the border between the two countries that is disputed. It is heavily mined and remote, making for difficult and treacherous work.

Upcoming plans include four missions per year divided equally between Central America and Peru/Ecuador. ■



### Program Summaries

Mr. Getter also summarized the program in each country within the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility:

*Honduras* is in the final phase of its demining program and by September of this year, it will be a mine-safe country.

*Nicaragua* and the OAS/IADB support an ambitious demining program. Over 600 people are involved in units on multiple fronts. IADB also supports regional headquarters of in-

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