

“STRIKE HOLD”
2-504TH PIR, 1BCT, 82ND ABN DIV



The day was December 20, 1989. Many in the battalion had signed out on Christmas leave before being quickly recalled. Operation Just Cause was the invasion of Panama by the United States, taking place between December 20 1989 and January 31 1990. White Devils were ready and parachuted into Panama’s Omar Torrillos Airport. Following the airborne assault, the Paratroopers soon found themselves engaged in fierce urban-combat and rural fights. Below are some personal experiences and stories of these brave men.

Glenn H. Goldman story

At the time I was a young captain serving as the Task Force 2-504 Fire Support Officer. I served with the White Devils from August 1989 to September 1991 and participated in JUST CAUSE, DESERT SHEILD and DESERT STORM. During Just Cause I was on Chalk #9, Right Door #6 (just opposite of then LTC Harry Axson, Commander, 2-504 and then CSM Ron Rath, CSM, 2-504). We jumped at 500 feet to minimize our time in the air exposed to enemy fire on Tocumen-Torrijos Airport with a follow-on Air Assault into Panama Viejo.

I retired from the Army on 31 May 2014 after 30+ years of active duty service--and I always viewed my time with the White Devils with great pride and fondness.



CSM Rath and I at the 25th Reunion held in Fayetteville 82nd Airborne Division Association club house, April 2015.

Glenn H. Goldman, Senior Civilian Advisor / Deputy Director Center for the Army Profession & Ethic ("CAPE")

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Ray Bruce story

I was with the 3rd, 7th Special Forces Unit station at Fort David Panama I was there during the beginning and start of the Just Cause. The 3-504 PIR had been prepositioned at Fort Sherman two weeks prior to the operation and was under the control of the 7th Infantry Division.

Ray Bruce, retired army.

Leo story

The following story was sent by Leo and was written by Melissa M Frye.

It is about a 2-504 Brother who was KIA in Panama December 20, 1989. He was in Delta Company and Leo served in Charlie Co. He was an immigrant from Peru and Leo was from Argentina.

He wanted to honor Alex with his story.

Peruvian immigrant Alex Manrique enlisted in the United States Army on 20 January 1988 in the hope of furthering his education. Jose Canales, a cousin from Peru who manages a hotel in Manhattan, said that Specialist Manrique-Lozano came to the United States and settled in Lauderhill, Fla. He gained the status of a permanent resident alien when he married an American. Mr. Canales said that the young man's dream was to become a civil engineer, and he hoped the army would be his route to a college education and a higher-paying job to help his family back in Peru.

An antitank weapons specialist with the 82d Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., Specialist Manrique-Lozano parachuted into Panama's Omar Torrillos Airport during Operation Just Cause in Panama on December 19, 1989. On the ground, he rejoiced that he was now an American Citizen. This would be a short lived joyous moment for Alex.

The 504th secured the Airport and spent the night there. Alex was killed while the 504th PIR entered Panama City the next morning when his unit came under attack by Panamanian Defense Forces near Panama Viejo. He took two rounds from an AK47 in his lower abdomen, and he died instantly. Family members from Lima and New York said that Specialist Manrique-Lozano had loved America, and that he had not died in vain because he had been defending the nation's ideals.

Burial: Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia
Plot: Section 60 Grave 2992

Leo (R) C Co 2-504th

Mo Fregia was a SPC in B 2/504.

The most memorable moment aside from the combat jump was the road march from Viejo to the Marriott to secure the AMCITS & Foreign Nationals being held in the basement of the hotel. We had AC130 Spectre support and called it the walk down scary Bologna Street.

Mo Fregia, 1SG (R)