



# EL HEMISFERICO

Winter 2004

Informing members of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

Sixth Edition



## WHINSEC celebrates third year

Story and photos by  
Spc. Adrian A. Lugo

“¡Libertad, paz y fraternidad! (Freedom, peace and brotherhood),” was more than just a unit motto, but also a phrase to celebrate as members of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation raised wine glasses and toasted to the institute’s third anniversary on Jan. 21.

Speaking to a packed auditorium, WHINSEC commandant Col. Richard Downie reflected upon the accomplishments, current events and future goals for the institute.

His first point was the enrollment of more foreign students to the institute, such as those from Canada and other Caribbean countries recently.

“One of our great accomplishments has been to expand the emphasis of this being a hemispheric institute,” Downie said. “Our name is the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, yet up until recently our focus had been geared more toward Latin America.”

“I’m glad to report that this year we have our first class taught in English (the Noncommissioned Officer Professional

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Col. Richard Downie leads a toast to the institute at the Gallery of Liberators, Jan. 21.

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## Nicaraguan receives Simón Bolívar Democracy, Human Rights Award

Story and photos by  
Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz

Nicaraguan Minister of Defense Dr. José Adán Guerra Pastora was honored by WHINSEC with the presentation of the Simón Bolívar Democracy and Human Rights Award at Pratt Hall Jan. 26.

WHINSEC Commandant Col. Richard Downie and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fisk, a member of WHINSEC’s Board of Visitors, presented the award to Guerra, who is the third recipient of this annual WHINSEC award.

Both Fisk and Downie commended Guerra for his work and contributions to hemispheric freedom and human rights.

“This is really an honor to acknowledge

one of the most distinguished civil servants of Nicaragua,” said Fisk. “He has helped lay the foundation for a more prosperous future for Nicaragua.”

Guerra thanked WHINSEC and the U.S. Government for “its support and partnership.” “I also thank God, my family, and especially my wife for supporting me,” he said. “I promise to continue to give my best.”

Guerra accepted the award on behalf of his fellow Nicaraguan people, who he believes are the ones who merit the award.

“This award truly belongs to the people of Nicaragua for their struggles and their efforts for a better tomorrow,” Guerra

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# Downie bids farewell to WHINSEC

**Col. Richard Downie,  
WHINSEC commandant**

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation is well on its way to being the premier institute preparing leaders to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

That was our first vision when we first considered what we wanted to become; it had many components and objectives to turn that vision into reality.

We recently held another vision session that not only gave us a roadmap for the future, but told us how we were doing in all those areas we looked at two-and-a-half years ago.

It was really impressive to look at the long list of goals and see how many have already been met.

You have all truly worked as an outstanding team to achieve remarkable results.

The support of so many outstanding people has made this assignment a true capstone of my service in the Army.

The institute's successes are the re-

sult of contributions from military and civilian, U.S. citizens and international members alike.

The value of the institute has been validated by many: from the Board of Visitors to the U.S. and international leaders who have visited us, from TRADOC and the American Council on Education, and from the students and guest instructors who give glowing evaluations of their time here.

As I depart the institute, I leave you in excellent hands.

Col. Gil Perez is a personal friend of mine. He is highly experienced in this region and he has an outstanding record as a leader. I know he will do well, because he has the support of all of you. I thank you all for your superb teamwork and for your outstanding achievements.

Best wishes to each of you as you take WHINSEC to the next level in strengthening democracy throughout this hemisphere.

¡Libertad, paz y fraternidad!



File photo

*Col. Richard Downie, WHINSEC commandant, retires from military service to become director of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at the National Defense University Washington, D.C. Col. Gil Perez, former chief of staff, U.S. Army South, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, will assume command of the institute during a ceremony in front of Ridgway Hall, March 11.*

## Get to know the institute's new commandant

Born in Havana, Cuba, Col. Gilberto Perez immigrated to the United States in 1962.

He is a graduate from Florida International University where he received Baccalaureate of Arts degrees in Political Sci-



Perez

ence and International Relations, with a specialty in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Perez was commissioned in the U.S. Army (Infantry Branch) in 1977 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

Perez has held many varied command and staff assignments through-

out his career such as an advisor to the Army of El Salvador; Chief of the Latin American Branch, Army International Affairs; Chief of the U.S. Military Advisory and Assistance Group, Peru; and Chief of Staff, U.S. Army South.

He has also served as an instructor at the U.S. Army School of the Americas.

Perez is married and has two sons.

### Editorial Board

**Col. Richard D. Downie, Commandant**

**Lee Rials, Public Affairs Officer**

**Peruvian Navy Capt. Jorge Nuñez, Deputy Public Affairs Officer**

**Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz, Editor, WHINSEC Public Affairs Office**

**Spc. Adrian A. Lugo, Copy Editor, WHINSEC Public Affairs Office**

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Development Class) and the participation of our Canadian fellows and those from Trinidad and Tobago, and Antigua,” added Downie.

Along with academics, Downie also announced the institute had received undergraduate and graduate-level accreditation this past year from the American Council on Education for all of its courses, like the Command and General Staff Officer (Legacy) Course.

As for WHINSEC’s future curriculum, Downie stated that the institute is in collaboration with regional leaders across the Americas in advancing current courses and tailoring future courses in peacekeeping.

He also spoke about the restoration and renovations made to Building 35, Ridgway Hall, such as the structural repair and electronic overhaul of Pratt Hall Auditorium, remarking that “a building with such a strong and rich history should never be left to lose its stature.”

The building dates back to the mid-1930s and, for its first 29 years, housed the U.S. Army Infantry School.



*Commandant Col. Richard Downie, wife, Deborah Downie, and Capt. (Peruvian Navy) Jorge Nuñez, acting assistant commandant, cut the first piece of the institutes' third-anniversary cake, Jan. 21. This celebration also marked Downie's final year as commandant.*

Downie named five people, former Phenix City Mayor Peggy Martin, Louly Diaz-Verson Jones, retired Col. Ralph Puckett, Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton and his wife, P.J., as Ambassadors of Good Will to WHINSEC.

This celebration also marked Downie’s final year as commandant. He retires from military service in March to become director of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.

As Downie addressed members of WHINSEC during a toast, he expressed satisfaction with the direction of the institute.

“The Board of Visitors said it best in their reports to the Secretary of Defense and Congress, when they said that WHINSEC is an excellent institution that is continuing to meet the full intent laid out in its directive, to provide security cooperation in the western hemisphere,” said Downie.

## Guerra, from page 1

said. “I dedicate this award especially in the memory of all the brave Nicaraguans who have given their lives for the sake of their country’s freedom.”

After the award presentation, Guerra spoke on the relationship between Democracy and Human Rights and the restoration of his country.

He also spoke about his experiences in promoting these principles.

“It is clear that we cannot ignore human rights,” said Guerra. “Democracy is the principal factor that fosters the growth of our country.”

Guerra, a distinguished lawyer and public servant, became the Minister of

Defense in May 2001.

He is also President of the National Demining Commission, member of the Office of National Security, and Executive Member of the National Commission for Disaster Prevention and National Council of the War on Drugs.

Simón Bolívar is known as one of South America’s greatest generals and is often referred to as “El Liberador” (The Liberator) and the “George Washington of South America.”

His victories over the Spaniards won independence for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.



*Downie presents the Simón Bolívar Democracy and Human Rights Award statuette to Guerra Jan. 26.*



# Stepping out, Flying high

Photos by Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz,  
Spc. Adrian A. Lugo





## WHINSEC soldiers conduct first unit airborne op

Text by Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz



It was a cold and still morning Jan. 13 when eighteen paratroopers, WHINSEC staff ranging from the commandant to instructors, geared up and accomplished an airborne operation over Fryar Drop Zone, Fort Benning.

The unit jump was a first for the institute since one had not been carried out since its inception.

According to all, the jump was a success. More opportunities for this training are expected to arise in the future. It will be geared not only for staff proficiency but also for training to be incorporated in the curriculum taught by the instructors.

**Opposite page:** Counterclock-wise from bottom, paratroopers undergo parachute landing fall training, which prevents injuries during jump; Safety Officer Capt. Chris Murray assists 1st Sgt. Jesse Lowman in showing how to properly hold the static line; Jumpmasters give commands to the jumpers during mock-door training; DZSO Staff Sgt. Jorge Avalos inspects Sgt. Heddy Ortiz prior to load time.



**This page:** Top, the paratroopers feel the warm rush of air emitted from the C-130 aircraft as they load from rear to front; Col. Richard Downie leads the way as the first jumper; Jumpmaster Sgt. 1st Class James Bobadilla makes the final exit of the mission.

## Q&amp;A ...

*Conference panels sound off on military, media issues*

Story by Dr. Donald B. Harrington,  
Dean of Academics

Commandant Col. Richard Downie opened WHINSEC's third annual Military, Media and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) Conference Feb. 20.

The conference focused on Operations Other Than War (OOTW). Morning and afternoon panels discussed Disaster Assistance and Peacekeeping Operations, respectively. Both panels considered the roles played by these key actors in OOTW activities with the WHINSEC student body. Throughout the conference, the importance of cooperation and coordination between these organizations, despite their different roles and short-term objectives, was highlighted.

As with all Institute conferences, a close linkage was established between the main themes of the conference and the Command and General Staff Officers Course which had just finished its Leadership block of instruction. Anthony Interlandi, Department of State Chair for Advanced Studies, and Dr. Russell Ramsey, Visiting Professor from Norwich University, coordinated the



*Jarrold Hoffman, Catholic Relief Services, Col. David McWilliams, U.S. Southern Command, and Carol Rosenberg, Miami Herald, field questions regarding their panels' discussion on the role of the military, media and non-governmental organizations in disaster assistance.*

conference and conducted pre- and post-conference sessions with the class to underscore these links and the purpose and themes of the conference.

Interlandi was the moderator for the morning panel discussing "Disaster Assistance: The Role of the Military, Media and NGOs." He underlined how each of these organizations has a different role to play during a disaster assistance operation. Each role can be complementary

rather than competitive if the value of cooperation was to be accepted and the need for open lines of communication understood, he said.

The first panelist was Jarrod Hoffman of Catholic Relief Services, an organization with extensive experience in disaster assistance. He spoke of his experiences and the role of NGOs in responding to human needs with impartiality. He discussed the symbiotic roles the military and NGOs can play to promote stability and human dignity in times of crisis.

The second panelist, Col. David McWilliams, U.S. Southern Command Public Affairs Officer, spoke of the need for the military to work in conjunction with the media to ensure the widest dissemination of public information to the world. McWilliams acknowledged the lack of understanding and even suspicion between the military and the media during disaster assistance operations and stressed the need for open channels of communication as the best way to overcome that lack of understanding.



*Kay Reed, Albany Herald (Ga.), Lt. Gen. (Ret) Ed Soyster, and Robert Buckman, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, La., Journalism Department, answer questions on peacekeeping operations and how the military, non-governmental organizations and media interact.*

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The third speaker, Carol Rosenberg, a Miami Herald reporter, spoke of her experiences covering the military and provided insights into how each serves the others needs. She outlined what the news media wants from the military in terms of openness of information and underlined how it was in the interest of all – military, governments, NGOs, media and victims – to get out an accurate picture of conditions and relief efforts.

The morning session concluded with a question and answer session between students and panelists in which the central themes of the importance of truthfulness, cooperation and coordination were underlined.

Ramsey set the context for and introduced the afternoon panel on “Peacekeeping: Interaction of the Military, Media, and NGOs.” He restated the main theme of the conference – the need for open cooperation rather than competi-

tion among organizations as the most effective way to forward the goals of a peacekeeping operation.

The first speaker of the afternoon session was Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Ed Soyster, who

**“While the military might take short-term pain under these circumstances, it would maintain the precious asset of credibility.”**

— Dr. Donald Harrington  
Academics dean

has extensive experience with peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. He spoke about the professionalism of the military and the need to be candid and forthright with the media.

Kay Read, who as an Albany Herald editor prepared reporters to accompany

peacekeeping operations around the world, spoke about the media’s role in promoting democracy through its mission to inform the public on the actions of their government.

The afternoon panel presentations ended with Robert Buckman, Department of Journalism of the University of Louisiana, who reported on peacekeeping operations in several areas of the world.

He reviewed the relationship and distinctions between the military and media cultures.

The conference ended with another question and answer session underlining the need for frankness and honesty between media and military in all circumstances, no matter what the outcome of a particular story.

While the military might take short-term pain under these circumstances, it would maintain the precious asset of credibility.

## Library dedicated to human-rights activists

Story by Spc. Adrian A. Lugo

Despite a malfunction at a nearby electrical sub-station, which caused a blackout at WHINSEC, Feb. 12, guests gathered to witness the rededication of the institute’s library.

The library was first dedicated the John B. Amos Library, Feb. 14, 1992.

Originally named in honor of the late Aflac founder who was influential in bringing the institute, then known as the U.S. Army School of the Americas, to Fort Benning in 1984, the library has now been rededicated to include his spouse, the late Elena Diaz-Verson Amos. Both championed democracy and human rights. Elena’s work in support of the region assisted individuals who had been persecuted in Latin American nations.

Born in Cuba, Elena came to Columbus, Ga., in the 1960’s and passed away at age 74.

“Elena Diaz-Verson Amos was a

woman who embodied a lot of the same democratic and human rights principles we hold sacred here at WHINSEC,” said Yamil Collazo, the library’s technical information specialist.

Collazo explained how Mrs. Amos was a board member of the Cuban-American National Foundation and former vice-president of the Valladares Foundation, an anti-Castro group working for human rights and the rights of political prisoners.

Mrs. Amos was also named Intercultural Ambassador of the Human Relations Committee for the State of Georgia in 1990.



Elena Amos

“It is only appropriate that we rename the library (the John B. and Elena Diaz-Verson Amos Library) because they both understood the importance of liberty and human rights throughout a democratic West ...” said WHINSEC Commandant Col. Richard Downie.

“Elena, who worked to fight oppression, especially that under a discredited political ideology, helped bring hope to those oppressed people through her work and philanthropic efforts. For that, I think it’s only fitting that we honor her memory in this way,” he said.

With help from a surviving sibling, Salvador Diaz-Verson of Diaz-Verson Capital Investments, LLC, Downie unveiled a portrait of Mrs. Amos that is displayed on the wall across her husband’s.

“May her vision and passion forever live on in the people who utilize this great facility,” proclaimed Diaz-Verson.

## EL HEMISFERICO

*Newsletter of the...*

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# *Sew cute ...*



*Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz*



*Spc. Maggie E. Ruiz*

*Left, as part of the curriculum, TAC-7 Medical Assistance Course students, SO3 Piero Serrano and ST3 Alexander Zamora, learn how to sew sutures to the skin of pig feet, Feb. 26. Right, Instructor Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Borboa demonstrates to TAC-7 MAC students an emergency delivery of an infant and prepares its umbilical cord to be cut, Feb. 25.*