

Centinelas de Rios Y Costas

By LT George Hogan, Jr., USNR
Special Boat Unit TWENTY-SIX

"Unidad Especial de Botes 26 opera 21 naves de combate a través de la costa y ríos navegables de América Latina. Los botes viajan a los lugares más remotos donde retos y aventuras son parte de la rutina diaria."

Located at Pier 3 on U.S. Naval Station, Panama Canal, Rodman, Panama, is a command unique to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Although it appears unassuming at first glance, the constant hum of activity soon makes even the casual observer aware there is more here than meets the eye.

The command is Special Boat Unit 26, and it enjoys the status as the sole forward deployed unit operating Naval Special Warfare craft working with and in Latin American on a daily basis. Missions of the unit are defense of the Panama

Canal, support for Naval Special Warfare operations and improving interoperability by conducting combined training with Central and South America.

Special Boat Unit 26 is a mix of fleet and Special Warfare sailors. Fleet personnel supply their technical expertise while SEALs provide jungle warfare and tactics skills. The results are boatswain's mates who are small arms experts, engineers who are combat medics, and SEALs who are knowledgeable and conversant

concerning the most detailed aspects in the maintenance of combatant craft.

The focus of the unit is on the two combat craft divisions. Coastal Division musters 30 personnel who man the three MK IV PBs. Riverine Division has 40 personnel assigned who maintain and operate four MK III PBRs, and 14 22- and 25-foot PBLs. Each craft type fills its own unique niche within the mission spectrum of the unit.

The PBs are ideally suited for shallow water



Three MK IV PBs moored at U.S. Naval Station, Panama Canal, Rodman, Panama

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