

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

SCRANTON FINAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. Synopsis	1
II. Basic Mission and Requirements	2
III. Sites	
A. Tamarindo	4
B. San Carlos	4
C. [1	4
D. []	5
IV. Indigenous Personnel	
A. Training Program	7
B. Procurement and Training	7
C. Signal Plans	10
D. Operational Briefing Of	11
E. Launching Of	12
F. Performance Of	13
G. Miscellaneous	14
V. Security	
A. Physical Security	15
B. LCFLUTTER	15
C. Clearance	15
D. White Paper	15
E. []	15
F. Middlecott Appendicitis Operation	16
G. []	16
H. []	16
I. Cover	16
J. Miscellaneous	17

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd.)

PAGE

VI. Staff Personnel	
A. Names of Instructors	18
B. Chronology	18
C. Other Staff Personnel Associated with Scranton	19
VII: Gear	20
VIII. Estimated Costs	21
IX. Disposal <i>eliminate</i>	22
X. Conclusions	23

I. Synopsis

SCRANTON was the official cryptonym used to designate the indigenous agent radio operator training program under sub-project MT/3 of Project PBSUCCESS. A total of 13 RO's, including 7 residents (RRO) and 6 tactical (TRO), and one cryptographer were trained and graduated from training sites in KMFLUSH from 6 March through 9 June 1954. 12 of these were launched from WSHOofs against the target by 15 June, the remaining operator being sent to SAHARA for use in sub-project PT.16. Present records indicate that 11 of the 12 RO's came up on the air, although only 5, mostly TRO's, managed to remain active throughout the entire period. Of the 11, one was interned by DTFROGS and 2 lost their equipment through enemy action. The latter 3 managed to rejoin friendly forces, 2 ^{being} ~~were~~ back on the air, and the third ~~was~~ about to be relaunched when the Project terminated. Incomplete records indicate the RO's handled a minimum of approximately 200 messages from and 100 to the field.

II. Basic Mission and Requirements

A. The original basic Scranton mission is detailed in Scranton file SCR/1. In brief it consisted in producing by D-15 a total of 20 WSBURNT operator agents, including 10 RRO'S and 10 TRO'S. These were to be deployed according to the tactics and strategy of unconventional warfare against 10 major WSBURNT targets. In general, the RRO'S were to be in contact with "inner forces" at each target, while the TRO'S were to accompany "shock forces" directed against each target. Both RRO'S and TRO'S were to furnish secure commo between their respective forces and their supreme headquarters. RRO'S originally were to live "black" and furnish commo up to D-Day at which time they were to go off the air and remain silent until D plus 30. This was to provide a means of reconstitution of inner forces and organizations in the event of failure. The TRO'S were to be ready to follow the shock troops into guerrilla type warfare if need be. With the controls thus envisaged, the supreme commander would possess highly flexible assets against most contingencies.

B. The original basic requirements of 10 RRO'S and 10 TRO'S were shaded to 7 RRO'S and 6 TRO'S when it became evident that Calligeris, the principal indigenous agent, was unable to furnish trainee candidates in the time desired. The new requirements were obtained by elimination of targets considered to be of lesser importance. Fulfillment of these requirements is discussed in Section IV of this report.

C. Supplementing the new basic RO requirements, new requirements in the form of 10 ^(at 6) cryptographers were added in an effort to increase the flexibility of the training program by relieving

last minute RO trainees of the necessity of learning crypto work and thus shortening the period of training necessary. However, Calligeris proved to be just as unsuccessful in obtaining crypto candidates and only 1 crypto operator was graduated as such.

III. Sites

A. Tamarindo - The original training site at Tamarindo, approximately 30 km west of the KIMELER Camp, was obtained by Jacob R. Seekford (ps) from [] on 10 January. Gear was flown to Nicaragua on 14 January, and the Tamarindo site was activated by Andrew F. Merton (ps) and John F. Middlecott (ps) on 29 January. However, on the next day, 30 January, before any trainees had arrived, the site was blown when the WSBURNT government published an expose mentioning inter alia, the name, location and purpose of this site. The site was deactivated the same day and the non-sensitive gear stored with [] pending policy decision by Headquarters. On 2 February, following indications by [] that a new site would be forthcoming after the storm blew over, Merton was ordered to return to Lincoln, while Middlecott was to sit tight and reactivate when able. A complete report on the above events is contained in the Scranton SCR/2 Part II file. Aerial photos of the Tamarindo site taken by Jacob R. Seekford are included in the same file.

B. San Carlos - On 19 February a tentative site was selected at San Carlos, approximately (no location found), but was rejected by [] as not secure enough ~~too public~~. No photos are available of San Carlos.

C. [] In view of time limitations, it was decided to utilize a site located on [] (property of []) about [] San Carlos capital, about 1 mile from the Saranac training camp. No facilities were available and it was necessary to construct living and training quarters in the open

jungle, the first week in March. Trainees began arriving about 21 February and were used in camp construction. Trainees were strictly compartmented from the Saranac camp. Actual training began on 6 March and continued at this site until 18 April, at which time activities were transferred to the Saranac site. It should be emphasized that living conditions were of the crudest at [] I, as were road communications. Photos are contained in Scranton file SCR/2 Part I.

D. [] - On 18 April, Saranac (PM) training activities closed and Scranton moved to the Saranac quarters in the hacienda ranch house of the [] Training continued at this site until Scranton closed on 9 June. Fairly comfortable facilities including a well, a latrine, and two cooks ([] men) eased the situation although the road communications system was still primitive. With the advent of the real rainy season in early June, [] was practically cut off from civilization and it was actually necessary in two instances to use horses for transportation. As a result of the road conditions, one more site change was contemplated to a point about 15 km from [], but because of the lack of control over the landlord of the proposed site, it was decided to purchase enough stores to tide [] over until the end of the training period. Photos of the [] site are included in the Scranton File SCR/2 Part II. A comparison of the scale of living related to civilized standards may be comprehended when it is recorded that rats often ran over the sleeping bodies of the trainees and instructors and that a 5 foot boa constrictor was kept by one trainee in the attic of the main building

as a counter measure. However, other than infrequent malaria attacks, the health of the trainees was consistently good.

IV. Indigenous Personnel.

A. Training Program

1. It requires a minimum of 16 weeks of instruction starting from scratch to turn out a satisfactory communicator, according to past experience. Also, D-Day was limited only by the rainy season, which in the target country normally begins in May and June. Thus, without interruptions and with a full complement of basic trainees on hand by 31 January, sufficient time just existed to fulfill requirements.

2. A training program was therefore set up in bare outline based on 16 weeks, which divided the available time on a daily basis between technical instruction and agent instruction. The technical section was modeled after examples contained in commo files, while the agent section was written up in the Spanish language by Andrew F. Merton (ps) who extracted and paraphrased pertinent sections from the Basic Tradecraft manual. Additional material was kindly made available by the Director of Training. This training outline and lessons are contained in Letter of Instructions, Scranton File SCR/1.

B. Procurement and Training.

1. A total of 20 trainees (See SCR/4 files) were eventually procured by Calligeris, the first 6 arriving about 21 February and the last one arriving 10 May. Obviously, the procurement of trainee candidates was not a smooth operation, nor did it make the fulfillment of the training mission any easier.

2. Apparently due to a basic misunderstanding by Calligeris, the latter at first sought to exfiltrate only exper-

perienced men from the target country. As the delay in procurement began to become a source of apprehension, investigation by Cadick (ps) and Lugton (ps) corrected the situation, and by 22 March, 11 trainees were on hand in Scranton of whom 4 were experienced. By this date, the above apprehensions had led Lincoln to reexamine the situation, as a result of which instructions were sent to the field to attempt to obtain mercenaries in KMFLUSH, WSHOOFs, LCPANGS, DTFROGS, [] and elsewhere, if necessary. At the same time, basic requirements were reexamined and pared to 7 RRO'S and 6 TRO'S. In another effort to remedy the situation, it was decided to ask for 10 (later 6) crypto trainees to relieve last minute RO trainees of learning crypto work. However, neither the mercenary nor the crypto recruitment idea prospered. Towards the end, it was necessary to rely upon Calligeris' ability to exfiltrate trained personnel. ~~Fortunately~~ ^{He} succeeded, and by D-Day the required 13 RO'S were trained and ready, nine of whom had had previous experience. Fortunately the 4 tyros were among the first to arrive. The remaining ⁷ 6 trainees were scratched for various reasons including security, illiteracy, inability "to grasp anything except generator crank handles", and lack of time. One man was graduated as a crypto clerk only.

3. With regard to training problems apart from trainee recruitment difficulties, delays caused by moving the training sites contributed to the overall difficulties. Also a factor following Merton's return to Lincoln was Middlecott's inability to speak Spanish. The basic levels of the trainees varied from intelligent to slow. All could read and write the Spanish language and most

displayed commendable perseverance. A partial confirmation of the need for ^a16 weeks training period is seen in the fact that the tyros, who received 14 weeks of training and were the last to graduate, were considered to be barely adequate communicators.

4. Training aids included blackboard lectures, code training tables, recorded tapes, field trips, training lectures from Director of Training, and, most important, an actual training circuit set up between Scranton and Sherwood. The latter circuit proved invaluable since it provided actual communication conditions over a distance of about 40 kilometers. Because of the necessity for compartmentation, it was necessary to let the trainees believe that the base station was in WSHOOPS. It is safe to say that the training circuit was the single most important factor in producing 13 Scranton graduates, and for this ^{reason} it is ^{desirable} ~~necessary~~ to point out the contribution made by the Sherwood operators who maintained the base end of the circuit 7 days a week.

5. Factors affecting the morale of the trainees were, on the positive side, the professional ability and competence of the KUCLUB instructors, their willingness to undergo the same hardships as the trainees, their ability to speak Spanish, the obvious backing given by [] and Skimmer, (i.e., sites and equipment), the messages from Calligeris, the presence of and occasional use of firearms, and the graduation ceremony itself, the ceremonial opening of a bottle of champagne and toasting the departing graduates. On the negative side were the presence of agitation, the dislike of mercenaries, the enforced isolation, the lack of women and hard liquor, and the lack of communication with

home. That morale was very high is probably best demonstrated in the field performance of the operators where it will be recalled that 11 out of 12 operators launched were eventually heard from.

6. Graduation of operators was not announced until immediately before their departure. Minimum time was given for packing, saying farewells, show down inspections, etc., so as to accustom the individual to frequent changes and uncertainties. It also precluded most of the last minute message-bearing to friends so contra productive of security. The champagne graduation referred to before added the proper note of solemnity to the occasion.

C. . . Signal Plans - These were prepared by Sherwood. In general they consisted of 2 guard channels with a selection of approximately 8 side frequencies. [] performed the necessary photographic work. Assignment of the plans was made by Ontrich (ps) in WSHOOPS. Assignments may be found in the Scranton file SCR/11-^(), with a consolidated list in SCR/11. Due to the relatively poor quality of the graduates, much of the actual operation took place on the guard channels, since the risk of losing the poorer operators during a frequency change was too great.

- D.
- E. Operational Briefing (Ontrich)

E.
F. Launching.

The 12 RO's were launched as follows by Ontrich:

Sig Plan	Operator	Destination	Date
ACEITE	TRO-38	Bond Shock	14 June
DIESEL (Equipment shot&up in action; rejoined and awaiting relaunching)	TRO-34	Hank Shock	14 June
GASOLINA	TRO-40	Danny Shock	15 June
JOBOS (unable to get to Frank; interned by DTFROES; released and rejoined troops; converted to TRO with Danny Shock)	RRO-27	Frank Shi	12 June
JOCOTA	RRO-28	Adam	12 June
MANGO	RRO-32	Adam	15 June
MANZANA	RRO-26	Cesar	15 June
PAPAYA	RRO-31	Cesar	10 June
PERA	RRO-22	ACP (Advance CP)	15 June
SANDIA (arrived Bond, equipment captured; rejoined at TORONJA)	RRO-25	Bond	11 June
TORONJA	RRO-24	Hank	12 June

F
g. Performance.

Following incomplete figures will indicate general performance:

ACEITE - 26 msgs from; 16 msgs to.

DIESEL - 17 msgs from/ (last one 21 June); 9 msgs to.

GASOLINA - 42 msgs from; 29 msgs to.

JOBOS - 13 msgs from; 10 msgs to.

JOCOTA - ? msgs from; 9?msgs to.

KEROSENA - 11 msgs from (last one 22 June); 6 msgs to.

MANZENA - 4 msgs from; ? msgs to.

MANGO - no show.

PAPAYA - Heard once on 18 June. No contact.

PERA - 71 msgs from; 42 msgs to.

SANDIA - 1 msg from.

TORONJA - 10 msgs from; 9 msgs to.

Approximately 200 messages were handled from the field and 100 to the field.

G.
E. Miscellaneous - Indigenous personnel at Scranton other than the trainees were limited to 2 KMFLUSH nationals who served as cooks and orderlies. These were [] and [] (lnu), National Guard privates, who were apparently normally stationed with Palace troops.

V. Security

A. Physical security was maintained by compartmentation of the Scranton operation from Saranac and Sherwood, the latter being 100 percent. Physical isolation was the secret of the compartmentation.

B. LCFLUTTER - all graduate trainees but one took and passed the LCFLUTTER examination, the remark being made that this group was the best of all groups tested. The one operator, Gasolina, who arrived at Scranton too late for examination, was treated as suspect, both on this account and because possibly pertinent derogatory info had been uncovered on a person bearing his name. The eventual decision to use Gasolina was vindicated when he turned out to be one of the more active operators. It is realized, of course, that this alone would not guarantee Gasolina's bona fides.

C. Clearances - The Office of Security, Headquarters, was responsible for uncovering trainee Juan Luis Alvarado Valverde as a one time member of a communist cell in the Costa Rican Communist Party, Vanguardia Popular. This information was confirmed by LCFLUTTER. The case of Gasolina was referred to in sub-paragraph B. above. In general, clearances were obtained in time to be of value to the operation and due credit must be given to Security for an all out successful effort. It should be added that in case there was the least suspicion of an operator, he was assigned as a TRO, under the constant supervision of trusted Calligeris men.

D. The effects of the WSBURNT "white paper" of 30 January have been referred to previously in this report.

E. One incident which might have caused a security hazard

trans-ambush

was the arrival of [] in KMFLUSH in a state of such intoxication he could not remember his alias. [] was returned to WSHOOPS and no damage resulted.

F. Another possible security hazard was the emergency operation on Middlecott for appendicitis. Handling and reporting of the incident by [] (ps) indicate that no security hazard resulted.

G. One incident of ~~possible~~ interest security-wise was the approach by an ex-UN employee, [], for employment by Scranton! A full security investigation at the time failed to disclose definitely derogatory information, but subject's connection with Raul Sierra, ^{top Callie's man in KMFLUSH at the time} who failed twice to pass LCFLUTTER examination, may point to one answer.

H. [] - About 1 June, [] the KMFLUSH cook, was taken to the Capital for his regular 1-day a month home. He failed to meet the return truck and after two days his absence was reported to Salamander. He was presumably drunk and listed AWOL.

I. Cover - The light [] cover given to the staff instructors apparently served the purpose. Major use of the cover was for overt commercial travel between FJHOPEFUL and Lincoln. Travel from FJHOPEFUL to and residence in KMFLUSH was black. Movement in KMFLUSH was facilitated by special travel permits issued by Salamander. The only time these failed to serve the purpose was during the assassination attempt against [] at which time all movement was restricted. The isolation of the Scranton sites served to ease ^e ~~this~~ strain on cover. Details of individual cover are on file in Security and Commo. ^A

J. Miscellaneous - Merton recalls he was told by one of the Commo staff that [] or [] once asked "who is Pivall". It is believed that the cables compromised by Seekford may be the answer.

VI. Staff Personnel

A. Staff instructors included John F. Middlecott, [redacted] and Andrew F. Merton. The bulk of the instruction was carried by the former two and too much credit cannot be given them. Middlecott spoke no Spanish although training was not delayed on this account. [redacted] Spanish was more than adequate for the job, while Merton's Spanish may be classified as adequate. Difficulty was experienced in getting [redacted] into KMFLUSH, which may have contributed to overall problems in meeting deadlines.

B. Merton and Middlecott activated the first Scranton site at Tamarindo on 29 January 1954. Following the expose of this site, Merton returned to Lincoln since his service in WSBURNT would have exposed PBPRIME interests. ^{should he have been blown} Middlecott carried on with the aid of Vincent Pivall (ps), Spanish speaking Saranac instructor, ^{and began} ~~beginning~~ training on 6 March. [redacted] arrived on 3 April to share the instruction load. Middlecott was recalled to Lincoln over 23 April - 3 May for consultation and briefing. After Middlecott's return to Scranton, he was stricken by appendicitis ^{on 21 May} and, following a successful operation, remained thereafter at Sherwood where he assisted the training net ^{to} ~~with~~ Scranton. It should be remarked that Middlecott's service following his operation was on a volunteer basis, a tribute to his professionalism. He was unable to serve further at Scranton since road communications were too rough for his safe convalescence. Following 21 May, [redacted] was aided by Merton who returned from Lincoln to Scranton for the short ~~period of~~ time remaining. [redacted] departed for headquarters on 5 June, leaving Merton to finish training ^{alone}

and close Scranton on 9 June.

C. Other staff personnel, not assigned to Scranton but who worked closely therewith, were Vincent Pivall, and Sherwood personnel, particularly DUNNAVANT (ps), who was top commo man in the area and who was responsible for preparation of signal plans and equipment. It is regretted that time and space does not permit adequate description and recognition of the part played by each of these.

VII. Gear- While reporting of gear performance is a technical matter, the following remarks may be made. Signal strengths were adequate and in some cases, depending upon favorable propagation conditions, excellent. 10-watt and $\frac{1}{2}$ watt equipment was used over ranges extending up to 380 miles at the most. The $\frac{1}{2}$ watt equipment was handicapped by the lack of a break-in feature. Noise levels were high. The best operating hours appeared to be in the early evening, and the indigenous operators tended to come up more at this time. Early morning hours were also used extensively.

VIII. Estimated Costs - Costs of gear will have to be obtained from commo. A total of about [] was expended for quarters, subsistence, supplies, etc. of the training camp and personnel.

Of this sum, approximately [] was lost in the events following the WSBURNT white paper expose. A complete report has been submitted to Finance with a copy in Scranton file SCR/3.

IX. Disposal (Ontrich)

X. Conclusions: - Following conclusions are set forth in statement form, with explanation where necessary:

A. Trainee procurement problems should be resolved at the earliest possible moment, once the relative role of agent radio operations has been determined. It is better to plan for 4 months of training beginning with raw recruits who are in ~~the~~ hand, rather than count upon the doubtful results of a search for experienced trainees.

B. Equally important with A. above is the placing of a training/operational case officer in direct contact with the principal indigenous agent, or if this is not possible security-wise, at least as an assistant to the case officer in contact with the P/A. In PBSUCCESS, Ontrich (ps) was obviously so overloaded with problems on so many different levels, he could not possibly give proper attention to 13 individual agent operator briefing and launching problems. This is to be construed only as praise for Ontrich in that he was able to accomplish the job under the conditions imposed by the circumstances. However, records indicate that as early as 28 February, direct radio commo with Calligeris was requested and same was not obtained until the first week in June. A sub-conclusion would be to get radio commo with the P/A first.

C. A third and self-evident conclusion is that resident agent operators should be launched and planted well in advance of any PP efforts which may bring crackdowns in their wake. It is regretted that trainee procurement and other difficulties did not make this possible in PBSUCCESS.

D. The use of Spanish speaking instructors contributed immeasurably to the keeping up of morale of the trainees as well as easing the logistical situations.

E. It is to be noted that the TRO'S, scholastically the poorest of the trainees, turned out the bulk of the traffic. This might indicate the relative willingness of the operator to perform under conditions of proper protection, and by extrapolation, points to a possible solution to the problem of getting resident agents to come up on the air, i.e., by increasing the agents subjective sense of security whenever possible, through the use of technical devices such as remote control, "invisible" antenna wires, extremely compact equipment, etc.

F. A technical conclusion, which perhaps does not belong in this report, is that plans should not include operating a propaganda broadcast and an agent base station together. The mutual interference of the functions contributed to the difficulties encountered in PBSUCCESS.

G. Due to the problems caused by slow procurement and "flaps", agent training was minimized, an undesirable circumstance which may have contributed to the RRO'S difficulties once launched. ^{enough} Through training in living "black" during a "roll up" or tactical situation would have been especially desirable in the case of Project PBSUCCESS.

H. Underlying the Scranton training program as it did the entire PBSUCCESS program, was the necessity of the cooperation of such people as [] It seems, however, that many problems would have been simplified if the Scranton program at least had been sit-

uated in an isolated location in WSHOOFs, a remark that may well be applicable to Saranac and other activities. The travel and documentation problems would have been simplified, as would have coordination and liaison with the P/A.

RRO activities from D to D+30.
I. ~~30 day commo following D Day, (Ontario)~~

While briefing included instructions for RRO's to lie low from D day to D+30, ~~in practice~~ ~~and~~ under the demands of the tactical situation as it developed, RRO's were in practice utilized more ^{or less} as tactical operators.