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Pg. 20

# Trio Given 6-Month Sentences For Ft. Benning Demonstration

## Group Wants School of Americas Closed

By Stephen Barr  
Washington Post Staff Writer

A federal magistrate has sentenced three opponents of a military training school for Latin American soldiers to six months in prison for participating in a demonstration that drew between 1,500 and 2,000 protesters to Fort Benning, Ga., last week.

The Nov. 16 demonstration marked the eighth anniversary of the assassination of six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter in El Salvador by a Salvadoran Army patrol. Nineteen of the 27 Salvadoran officers implicated in the killings were graduates of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas at Fort Benning.

At the demonstration, 601 protesters attempting to deliver petitions calling for the closing of the school were arrested. Members of the protest group, which included priests, nuns, military veterans and college students, were accused of trespassing after they marched down the fort's main road carrying eight cardboard coffins filled with the petitions.

The Rev. Roy Bourgeois, 58,

founder of the School of the Americas Watch (SOAW) and leader of the march, said military police presented most of the demonstrators with a letter that banned them from entering the fort for a year.

But 28 marchers, who had arrest records because of previous demonstrations at the fort, received summonses to appear before U.S. Magistrate William Slaughter last Wednesday, he said.

Of the 28, three decided to plead no contest and received six-month prison terms and a fine of \$3,000 each. The three—Carol Richardson, 53, of the District; Richard Streb, 72, of Roanoke, Va.; and Anne Herman, 64, of Binghamton, N.Y.—will begin serving their time within one to three months, depending on when space becomes available in federal prisons.

Richardson, who heads the SOAW office here and has served as a United Methodist minister in Ohio and Maryland, said the three pleaded no contest in order to "test the waters." The jail time, she said, shows that authorities are "attempting to silence" protests against the Fort Benning school.

The remaining 25 protesters probably will appear before U.S. District Judge Robert Elliott early next year, Bourgeois said. "I can assure you we'll be getting hit with the max," said Bourgeois, who noted that he has spent 3½ years in jail because of protest actions directed at the school.

But he said the group, if given jail time, "will speak from prison. They cannot silence us, and when we get out of prison, we will return in greater numbers to the main gate of Fort Benning every November 16th until we close what we consider a school of assassins."

Bourgeois and other critics of the school point out that its graduates include Roberto D'Aubuisson, the leader of death squads in El Salvador; Panama general Manuel Antonio Noriega, currently imprisoned on drug charges; two of the three Salvadoran officers accused in the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero; and Haitian general Raoul Cedras, who overthrew that nation's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in 1991.

Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-Mass.), who has helped lead a congressional effort to close the school, contends that in the post-Cold War era it no longer serves the nation's interest.

But supporters of the school argue that it instills professionalism in Latin American soldiers and strengthens fragile democracies. Army officials said the school has stepped up its human rights instruction in recent years.

The Dallas Morning News

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Pg. 1

# Awash in adventure

## Training centers help Coast Guard rescuers handle waves of danger

By Tony Hartzel  
Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

ILWACO, Wash. — Out on rugged Cape Disappointment, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Darrin Wallace was doing his best impersonation of a seagoing Emmitt Smith.

Wave after 15-foot wave crashed down around his boat, but the 11-year veteran kept his eyes on the horizon, searching for a hole through which to run.

In these rugged conditions, Petty Officer Wallace takes some of the Coast Guard's best and makes them even better. Each fall, dozens of petty officers attend the National Motor Lifeboat School, one of two elite Coast Guard training centers based along the Columbia River mouth's churning waters.

On a recent run, waves that

would splinter a regular merchant ship buffeted Petty Officer Wallace's reinforced motorized lifeboat. Just as the Dallas Cowboys running back sometimes does, Petty Officer Wallace recognized a big hit coming. A giant wave lurched up, and he couldn't turn quickly enough to meet it head-on. With only seconds to brace himself, he screamed eight times for his crew to hang on.

The roaring wave engulfed the boat's side, pushing it to about a 60-degree angle. Instinctively, he slammed down on the throttle, giving his 44-foot vessel enough power

June 30, 1993  
Defense Base Closure Commission  
1700 N. Moore Street #1425  
Arlington VA 22209

(S)

R 7/6/93

Close Fort Benning (9)

Dear Commission:

Thank you for doing a very difficult but necessary job.

I realize that many of your decisions and recommendations have been made, but I'm hoping it isn't too late for me to present one suggestion for your consideration.

Given the fact that we must close some bases and take some people's jobs away, may I urge you to think over the possibility of withdrawing all funding from the School of the Americas at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia? The best, most reliable information that I can get has convinced me that the School is doing far more harm than good. No matter what it says it intends to do, the human rights record of too many of its graduates is absolutely appalling. The U.N. Truth Commission on El Salvador's identification of School of the Americas graduates as perpetrators and planners of some of that nation's worst atrocities seems to me to tell us that the School needs to be closed down.

Will you please consider recommending the closing of the School of the Americas at Fort Benning? I believe that our country's concern for human rights would be beautifully illustrated by such a decision on your part.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Lewis Sinclair* *Mary B. Eastland*

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