RWI-HC-007 V1 — Which real event is interview Question 3? (blind pass)

Hindcast benchmark, version 1. An interview answer by a former US special operations officer describes an incident without names, places or dates. The owner knows the event. This pass ranks candidate real-world events from open sources only, before any hint. It is kept unchanged; the owner's grading is added at the end. Version 2 uses the hint and is issued separately. The interview text is not published, and the career details in it were not used to identify the interviewee.

1. Constraints taken from the answer

#	Constraint	Weight
C1	Between 2012 and 2019, in a special mission unit; a task force responsible for North Africa	hard
C2	A four-person element on the ground	hard
C3	Ambushed by a large element of a paramilitary organization known to operate in the area	hard
C4	Two escaped; two were captured and held	hard
C5	No regular US diplomatic presence in the country	hard
C6	No force on hand for a rescue; interlocutors of doubtful motives; little support from other agencies	medium
C7	Politically sensitive for the US and for several allies working in the area	medium
C8	The aim was to keep it out of the press	medium
C9	Resolved by a surrogate who reached the group and negotiated	medium

2. Ranking (as submitted)

Rank	Candidate	Matches	Misses
1	An unreported incident in Libya after the US Embassy in Tripoli was evacuated (July 2014), within 2019; a militia as the "paramilitary"	C1, C3, C5, C7, C8	Cannot be named from open sources
2	Sabratha, Libya, 27 Dec 2013: four US military personnel (reported as likely special operations forces) stopped at a checkpoint; a vehicle reported burned; held a few hours, then released	C1, C2, North Africa, plausibly C3, C7	C4 (all four held), C5 (the embassy was open), C8 (public within hours)
3	Al-Watiya, Libya, 14 Dec 2015: about 20 US commandos ordered out by a local militia (see RWI-HC-003-P2)	C1, C5, militia, C7	C2, C3 (no ambush), C4 (no capture), C8
4	Tongo Tongo, Niger, 4 Oct 2017 (ISGS ambush)	Ambush	Not North Africa; not a paramilitary; 11 Americans; embassy open; widely reported

2.1 **Reasoning submitted.** The deciding constraint is C5: in North Africa in 2012–2019, "no regular US diplomatic presence" points to Libya after July 2014. Sabratha 2013 was the closest public analogue but fails three hard facts. The expected answer was an event never reported, or reported only in sanitized form: open sources would narrow it to Libya, 2014–2019, against a militia, but not to a date.

3. Owner's grading (31 Oct 2026, after submission)

Rank	Grade
1	Try harder.
2	Test it.
3	Warm, very warm.
4	Wrong; write it up anyway.

3.1 **Hint for version 2:** the event was reported only in sanitized form, and the unit was Delta Force.

3.2 **What the grading says about this pass.** The country and the period were right. Ranking Al-Watiya third was the main error: it was dismissed on the public account (no ambush, no capture), when the hint says the public account was sanitized. A sanitized account should have been read as a lower bound on what happened, not as a description of it.

3.3 **Score:** V1 does not name the event. Graded a miss with the right country and period.

Sources

- NPR, CNN, NBC News, PRI, AP via Dallas Morning News: four US military personnel detained near Sabratha, 27–28 Dec 2013.
- Newsweek, SOFREP (New York Times), Press TV: US special operations personnel ordered out of Al-Watiya air base, 14 Dec 2015.
- Wikipedia, ABC News, Military Times, Army Times: the Tongo Tongo ambush, 4 Oct 2017.
- RWI-HC-003-DECODEDELTA1 and RWI-HC-003-P2 (Al-Watiya).