

71/72

7150
Testimony of Maj. Oscar Fernandez Mel,
Chief of Armed Forces Medical Corps.
(was at 230)

XO
C

Shoot down of Baker
(by AA - 1981)
Claims 3 aboard
the B-26

HISTORY OF AN AGGRESSION

actually there a little over a month, until only 5 or 6 mercenaries were still at large. That is, I had contact with the great majority of them. By the way, I was amazed the day the mercenary, Pedro de Armas, testified. He was our third prisoner at the Australia Sugar Mill. When he arrived we asked him, without pressuring him, whether he wanted to make a statement, and he said yes. We called a stenographer for him; the stenographer came in a little while, but his hand was already tired. We decided to give the prisoner a pad and pencil so he could write. Now he comes here—he was in an empty room, no one pressured him—
get he comes here and denies it.

In relation to the planes, I must add that on the 19th, at about 6:00 in the morning, a B-26 flew over the Australia Sugar Mill, and bombed and strafed it. As it flew over a second time, our anti-aircraft artillery hit it and shot it down. The plane made a forced landing on a cleared cane field and we immediately sent a patrol to see what happened there. We reached it, and some farmers told us that two men had jumped from the plane and escaped. We found the body of one of them there. There were three of them — one whose body was charred, and two that jumped out. We immediately went after them. We found them in an orange grove about 4 or 5 kilometers from the place where the plane crashed.

One of the crew was named Leo Francis Berles of the 148 Beacon Street, Boston. His Social Security Card was No. 014-07-6921 and his pilot's license was No. 083231M, indicating that he was an American.

Prosecutor—Major Fernández Mel, you stated that our Medical Corps gave aid to our Revolutionary Armed Forces as well as to the mercenaries. You also said later that you treated many of the wounded...

Witness—The mercenaries?

Prosecutor—The mercenaries.

Witness—Almost all of them.

Prosecutor—Well, in general, what was their attitude at that time? Could you see any civilian, any rural community destroyed by mercenary planes?

Witness—Yes, of course. All of the right side of Pálpite, all of it was burned by the strafing of the planes; in ad-

dition to the one Red C destroyed by

Prosecutor
bombed and

Witness
subject. W. Berles, he was bomb; among of Jagüey C prevent the because w. —their G. sent to the that should arriving at

Prosecutor
Pedro de A

Witness

Prosecutor
be given a

Witness
paper all to room.

Prosecutor
of mind?

Witness
He even at United States

Prosecutor

Witness

Prosecutor
any question

Defense
Answer

you have from Arma

Witness

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL 1997

Baker named
Berles
Bell
Berles