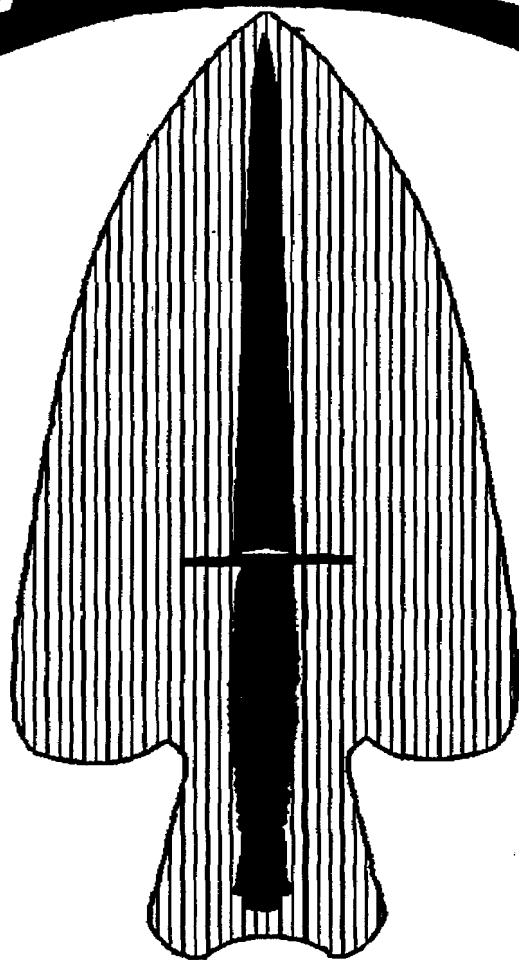


**ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS
FORCE IN HAITI: 1991-1995**

AIRBORNE



**UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
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Richard W. Stewart, Ph.D.
USASOC Historian

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OPERATION UPHOLD/RESTORE/MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY:

THE ROLE OF ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS
November 1991-June 1995

USASOC DIRECTORATE OF HISTORY, ARCHIVE, LIBRARY
AND MUSEUMS

HISTORY DIVISION

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THE CARIBBEAN SEA AND HAITI



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CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND

Although the United States had sporadically intervened in Haiti in the 19th century, the twentieth century has seen numerous interventions of the US into Haitian affairs. The most serious of these interventions occurred from 1915-1934. On 28 July 1915 a force of 300 U.S. Marines landed at Port-au-Prince. They landed to restore order after the President of Haiti, G. Sam, had been torn literally to pieces by a mob after he had ordered the killing of over 150 political prisoners. (President Sam's three immediate predecessors had been deposed in a more traditional Haitian manner, by revolution, but of their two immediate predecessors, one had been poisoned and the other blown up in the National Palace.) U.S. Marines had been standing offshore fearing German fishing in these "troubled waters". As Haiti descended into chaos, the Marines landed on the then-accepted justification that Haiti was likely to renege on its international debts.

The original force was reinforced and moved inland, restoring order and disarming the ramshackle, highly politicized, over-officered Haitian Army. Soon after, the Americans began to recruit for the replacement army, the *Garde d'Haiti*, as well as a police force of 2400 men commanded by 100 U.S. officers. The *Garde d'Haiti* was the original name given to what later became the *Force Armee d'Haiti* or FAD'H.

With Haiti enjoying more peace than it had known in decades, the Americans turned to developing the country, building roads, clinics, hospitals, reservoirs, sewage systems and other public works. What would today be called nation-building or internal defense and development (IDAD). The saying went that if one picked up a telephone and got a dial tone, it must have been installed by the Marines. Almost eliminating government graft, U.S. administrators supervised the fair collection of taxes. In fact, it is claimed that the U.S. occupation of Haiti cost the American taxpayers nothing; it was all financed by equitably administered and collected taxes.

The U.S.-Haiti treaty of 1915 gave the former control over the customs and *Garde*, thus making Haiti unofficially a protectorate of the United States. The fact that this instrument was drawn up by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin Roosevelt, speaks volumes as to the causes and nature of the American occupation. Two years later, the Haitian legislature was dissolved and would not be reconvened until the American departure. The American attitude was that the country was being now so well run that there seemed to be little, if any, need for

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a legislature's "useless" political maneuvering and "tiresome", questioning of the "disinterested" American administration.

The U.S. combination of good works and inevitable racial condescension sparked resentment among many of the Haitian elite. Sympathetic observers (and there were a number in the United States) said that these protestors were simply nationalists, outraged by the insult to their nation's sovereignty, but also they were doubtless also provoked by the petty restrictions and bureaucratic formulations that accompanied even a "Progressive" occupation. Mail and newspapers were censored and some of the elite found themselves under military surveillance. All of this was for Haiti's own good, according to American officers and administrators, but many Haitians did not see it that way. The Americans on the spot replied that this was simply the old corrupt power structure which missed their former opportunities for exploitation and corruption.

Haitian resentment erupted in the so-called Cacos War (1918-1922), a guerilla insurrection in the Central Plateau, led by members of the Mulatto elite and disgruntled Haitian army officers. The Central Plateau and the Cap Haitian regions were traditionally difficult areas of the country to control and guerilla gangs worked out of those areas. The spark was probably the so-called corvee regulation, which required Haitians to work on the public roads in work-gangs if they had no cash to pay their taxes. In vain, American administrators explained that such laws were in effect even in the United States, where cash-short farmers could thus work off their tax obligations. Forced labor probably seemed too much like slavery to the average Haitian peasant.

The Marines responded with search-and-destroy operations that killed thousands of suspected guerrillas. These so-called "atrocities" were publicized in the United States, with the Women's International League for Peace and Justice claiming that Haitians were burned alive, etc. Others, more plausibly, told of burning of crops, and destruction of property, all too reminiscent of the American response to the Philippine Insurrection of a little more than a decade previous. The pioneering aerial bombing of rebel areas was also denounced as barbarism. A Senatorial inquiry absolved the Marines of all but isolated acts of terror, but did seem to reflect growing American unease about the occupation, or perhaps simply fatigue with the uplifting gospel of Progressivism in the wake of World War I.

The rebels lost the Caco War, as was to be expected. Not only were they up against Marines, but they had only a few rifles and no possibility of outside aid. The lack of any sanctuary for

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their guerrilla bands was probably crucial. However, the leaders of the revolt were adopted as heroes by the elite and particularly by Haitian writers and artists, often as part of a growing sense of what would later be termed "Negritude", or personal pride in black culture, language and religion in opposition to foreign elements.

The first steps toward the removal of U.S. forces from Haiti were taken by the Hoover administration in 1930, and put into effect by Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" policy. A U.S. fiscal agent remained to control the customs until the Haitian debt should be paid, and was finally withdrawn in 1941.

Written works on Haiti that appeared in the 1940s and 1950s emphasized the peace and good order of the U.S. administration. But as Haiti reverted to barbarism under the Duvaliers, and as Americans became far more aware of their legacy of racism, the U.S. occupation was interpreted increasingly as insensate imperialism, administered through brute force by racist aliens. Finally, as Haiti's economy slid down to the levels of the less-developed world, even the public works of the Americans were questioned. The intervention must be adjudged a failure in most of its expressed goals of "civilizing" or "democratizing" the Haitians even if it achieved its short term goal of forcing the payment of Haiti's international debt.

The US tended to ignore Haiti as much as possible in the decades following our withdrawal. However, increasingly repressive governments and the beginning of large scale migration of Haitians to the US in the 1980s and early 90s changed the equation. In December 1990, the Haitians held democratic elections and Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a noted leftist, was overwhelming elected as President. When the Haitian Military (the *FAD'H*) overthrew the democratically elected Aristide on 30 September 1991, the US found itself in a quandry. Aristide had not been a pro-US leader and had brought on the coup in part by his and his supporters corrupt and unconstitutional maneuvers. However, as the military government grew more repressive, hundreds of Haitians began setting sail to America on rafts, small boats and anything that would float. In response to the humanitarian and political pressures, the US soon found itself committed to restoring the deposed Aristide to power.

US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

The most recent involvement of the US military in the latest Haitian crisis occurred in October 1992 with the interception of hundreds of Haitians on the high seas by US naval and Coast Guard vessels. Rather than process the Haitians ashore, with all the

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legal problems of claiming political asylum on US soil, the administration decided to create a number of temporary camps at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to house the "migrants" while determination was made as to whether or not they deserved political asylum. The Operation was initially called Operation SAFE HARBOR, but quickly the name changed to Operation GTMO (short for Guantanamo Bay).

OPERATION GTMO:

On 27 November, 1991, elements of the 96th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to assist the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps in coping with a flood of refugees from Haiti. The mission of establishing migrant camps was given to the newly established Joint Task Force for Operation Safe Harbor, shortly thereafter changed by the Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Command (USLANTCOM) to Operation GTMO. The 96th CA Battalion and a reserve component composite unit helped establish and administer six huge tent camps for up to 12,000 migrants. Using translators and carefully chosen local leaders, the 96th CA Battalion personnel, later joined by elements of the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), separated the discordant elements from the peaceful families, coordinated sanitation briefings and mess facilities and established order in the camps. The majority of the migrants were repatriated to Haiti in early 1992, leaving only a few political asylum candidates in place.

THE HAITI ASSISTANCE GROUP (HAG)/CJTF HAITI

On 6 August 1993, the initial cell for the Haiti Assistance Group which later formed the Combined Joint Task Force Haiti was formed at Fort Bragg. Commanded by former 7th SFG(A) Commander Colonel James G. Pulley, the Haiti Assistance Group (HAG) was to be a Combined, Joint UN operation to provide nation assistance programs to Haiti and reorganize and reform the source of many of Haiti's problems: the Haitian military. All of their efforts were oriented on establishing the conditions for the restoration of democracy to Haiti and the creation of a stable government.¹

Some of the specific mission goals of the HAG were:

- Prepare plans for organizing the FAD'H:
- Provide quality professional military training

¹Operation CJTF Haiti After Action Report (FOUO), 16 Nov 1993.

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- Provide detailed training requirements at general, regional and unit levels.
- Conduct Medical Readiness and Training Exercises (MEDRETE)
- Conduct nation assistance construction projects
- Integrate host nation forces in the nation assistance programs.
- Coordinate implementing foreign military finance (FMF) and international military education and training (IMET) programs.
- Transition the military mission to international agencies, the Government of Haiti and USACOM security and nation assistance programs.²

According to Colonel Pulley, the plan was to conduct operations in support of these mission goals for approximately 6 months and then turn over the operation to international agencies. In one of the key mission areas, prepare plans for organizing the *FAD'H*, a critical mission of the HAG/CJTF was to assist the UN commander in separating the Army from the police mission. Then the UN would undertake the five year program to establish a police force complete with police academy, organization, pay system, promotion system, etc.³

Major elements of US Army forces involved in the HAG/CJTF effort included:

2d Bn 3d SFG(A)
E Co 96th CA Bn
9th PSYOP Bn
35th Signal Bde
4-17th Cav
530th S&S Bn
358th CA Bde

Other Marine, Air Force and Navy medical, engineer, and military police assets were involved in the CJTF. The proposed Joint Task Force would be approximately 599 personnel strong including 106 Special Forces Trainers. (See Chart 1) Initially under US control, the JTF would fall OPCON (Operational Control)

²Ibid.

³Oral History Interview with Colonel James G. Pulley, conducted by Dr. Joseph R. Fischer, Assistant USASOC Historian, at Fort Bragg, NC 2 March 1994.

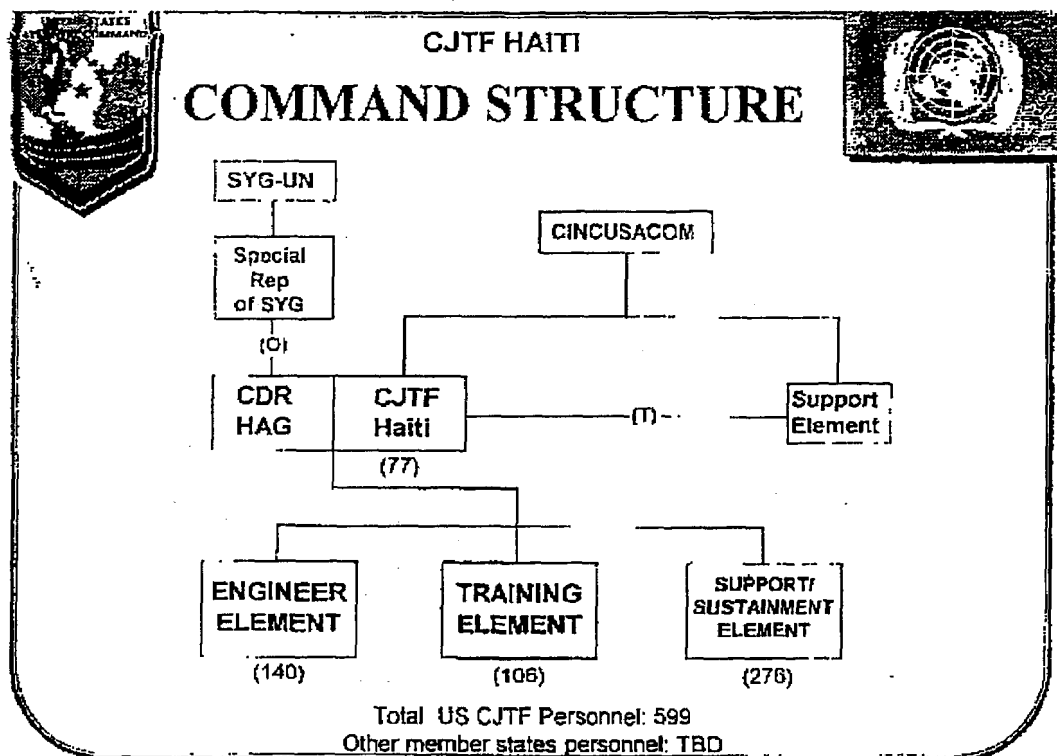
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under the UN special envoy (at the time Mr. Dante Caputo). (See Chart 2)

CHART 1

CJTF HAITI	
CJTF FORCES	
Command Element and Headquarters	82
Training Element	106
Seabees	90
USMC Engineer Unit	50
Medical Unit	38
Logistics Support Unit	116
Communications Detachment	26
PAL Element	20
Civil Affairs Element	12
Military Police	10
CI Detachment	4
Flight Detachment	47
US Total	599

CHART 2



Planning for assistance to the Haitian Military began with the formation of the planning cell in August. An additional planning staff was created at USACOM (U.S. Atlantic Command--formerly USLANTCOM) on 18 August. The J3 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was briefed on the initial plan on 2 September. Then, in an action symbolic of the ability of the US military to prepare plans faster than the political process could move, the UN finally approved a Security Council resolution authorizing the permissive entry into Haiti of this UN force.⁴

⁴One of the points which comes through clearly in the HAG AAR is that the desired planning process for this mission was almost completely backwards from the reality. The process should have begun with a UN resolution, then moved on to receiving planning guidance, developing the plan, building a budget, obtaining a Note Verbale (response from member states) and moving to the final UN Security Council Resolution and a JCS execute order. The actual process began with execution planning on the part of the US military, moved to a UN Security Council Resolution, plan development, request for a plan from the Secretary General, the JCS Execute Order and then the final authorizing Security Council Resolution followed by the Note Verbale. See briefing chart, HAG/JTF Haiti

Even with the approval of the entry of the force into Haiti, there remained a number of distinct problem areas with the entire mission. The first involved the basic planning assumptions of the JTF. No military plan is written without assumptions (best guesses) of the conditions on the ground at the time of the implementation of the plan. Yet often those assumptions prove ill-founded. This was certainly the case with Haiti. The key assumptions included the following:

- A permissive environment would exist to allow the force to enter.

- The proposed restructure of the *FAD'H* was supported by senior Haitian military and civilian leaders (especially as exhibited in their signing of the Governor's Island accords.

- The members of the CJTF Haiti would be accorded an acceptable Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA) status which would define their presence as diplomatic personnel and clarify their legal immunity from local prosecution in the event of an incident. This is similar in the US lexicon as a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which defines the legal and civil relationships of US forces invited into and resident in a foreign country.

- That Haiti would hold US and UN forces harmless from all civil or legal claims against them.

- That the UN would approve the rules of engagement (ROE) submitted by USACOM

- That US forces, even under UN auspices, would not participate in or support control of civil disturbances.⁵

UN/INTERAGENCY PLANNING PROCESS in the HAG/JTF Haiti AAR in the USASOC Archives.

⁵Slide briefed to USACOM from the HAG AAR entitled, "Potential for Mission Success". The basic conclusions of this slide were that the mission could have succeeded. The task organization was approximately correct, the timeline of events was tough, but achievable and the command and control arrangements were clean enough (although doubtless not perfect) and workable. However, with the failure of many of the basic assumptions (and a weakening of US willpower after the Somalia incident, the HAG did not get the chance to accomplish the mission.

As it turned out, many of these assumptions proved invalid. The permissive environment could be, and was, manipulated, by (in the words of Colonel Pulley) "an infrastructure of very powerful, well armed gangsters and thugs".⁶ There were also senior Army and civilian officials who did not want the Governor's Island accord to succeed because that mandated the return of the despised (by them) President Aristide. They had not, in reality, bought into the proposed solution and were masters at delay, confusion and manipulation.⁷ Finally, the US and UN never did agree on the SOMA or ROE for US forces under UN control as part of CJTF Haiti. Without an approved, agreed to SOMA, US forces would be vulnerable to local prosecution. Without an agreed to ROE, US forces were supposed to be unarmed. Both the US and Canadian military wanted their soldiers to carry sidearms at all times, even though a 9 mm Beretta pistol is no match for automatic weapons used by many street thugs in Haiti. The "heavier" weapons, still nothing more than M-16s, were to be locked up but available if needed. The UN did not agree to this and right up to the last minute before the scheduled landing of the main body of soldiers, the UN special envoy told General Cedras and others that the soldiers would be unarmed.⁸ This added immeasurably to the risk to US personnel and to the mission. It was only after a direct physical threat to US personnel that the US State Department relented, at the last minute and in lieu of agreed upon ROE, to allow the forces already present in Haiti awaiting the main body to have three M-16 Rifles.⁹

The end of the HAG/CJTF Haiti mission occurred in a blaze of publicity with the turning away and the return home of the *U.S.S. Harland County* with the main body of UN/US forces on 11 October 1993. From the first, the Commander of the CJTF had

⁶Pulley interview, p. 3.

⁷Colonel Pulley, who worked with many of the Haitian leaders, remarked in his interview about the key officers of the *FAD'H*, for example, as "very smart men" and "masters of the stalling tactic." "They understand human psyche. They understand the way the UN works. They are not country bumpkins and buffoons and illiterate moronic idiots like some people in this country and the UN have decided they are." "They are very bright and very clever." It is often a failing of US policy makers that they underestimate their opposition.

⁸Pulley interview, pp. 23-24.

⁹*Ibid.* According to Colonel Pulley, the physical threat to US personnel had to be matched with physical threats to State Department personnel in order to accomplish this minor upgrading of defensive capability.

not wanted the landing of the main body to occur in a blaze of publicity. The advance elements of 61 personnel were already in place (they had arrived on 6 October) and were assuming a suitably low profile.¹⁰ The goal of the HAG/CJTF Haiti was to assist the *FAD'H* in regaining credibility in the eyes of their own citizens. A major spotlight on the arrival of foreign troops would undercut that credibility. It would also, in an unpleasant analogy, look too similar to the glare of press lights which greeted SEALs and Marines going ashore in Somalia: a mission that had proceeded to go from bad to worse. However, contrary to the Commander's advice, the State Department decided that a "three ring circus" approach, with perhaps an intent to overwhelm any opposition right from the start, would be the method employed.

The attempted landing of the main body from the *Harland County* was frustrated at the last minute by a combination of violent demonstrations organized by "thugs" and an unwillingness of the US administration to risk further violence.¹¹ The UN agreement was in tatters. The LST sailed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on the 12th of October after aimlessly hanging about the harbor of Port-au-Prince for a day. On 21 October the ship was recalled and by mid-November the entire CJTF had been disbanded.¹²

CONTINGENCY PLANNING AFTER HAG/CJTF HAITI

The failure of the "permissive" entry of UN/US forces into Haiti prompted a complete relook by USACOM at the entire Haiti problem. In particular, Army SOF and Marine elements began planning for the next logical mission: an extraction, or NEO

¹⁰The predeployment site survey had been in Haiti for ten days (11-22 Septmber) and an initial visit of UN/US personnel had ocured from 7-11 September and benefited from its low profile. They had few problems accomplishing their missions.

¹¹Just the week prior, US Ranger units in Somalia had suffered heavy casualties in an ambush which had turned around the US policy of support to the UN's attempt to capture General Farah Aideed. The adminstration was still dealing with the political fallout from that operation and was probably unwilling to risk any more reverses.

¹²Colonel Pulley recommended that a small CJTF staff of approximately 85 personnel (only 35 full-time members) be retained at USACOM to continue to plan for future operations in Haiti. This standing JTF Adaptive Force was to address the full range of Humanitarian/Civic Action/Nation Assistance Missions in Haiti and not just focus on the military takedown of Haiti which would be the focus of any warfighting HQ (such as the XVIII ABN Corps).

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(Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation), of US citizens if the violence accelerated. The planning process was long and exasperating. Most of the plans, as is common with most contingency plans, were never implemented. However, the planning process itself uncovered information, refined procedures and synchronization techniques and prepared XVIII ABN Corps and Army Special Operations elements to deal with any eventuality. Thus, when the time came to switch plans at the very moment of execution from a forced entry plan to a permissive entry plan (with very different forces and events), that switch occurred with hardly a ripple.

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Chapter 2 (pages 12-27) is not available due to limited distribution.

CHAPTER 3: OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY

Operation Restore Democracy, the forced entry into Haiti by US forces, was averted on 18 September 1994 when former President



Jimmy Carter, retired General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn negotiated a settlement with General Cedras to allow U.S. forces to execute a permissive entry into Haiti with the intention of restoring the Aristide government to power. By the time negotiations had finally borne fruit, the vanguard of U.S. paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division and the 75th Ranger Regiment (A) were only hours away from

their drop zones in the vicinity of Port-Au-Prince (PAP) while the II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) was preparing to execute an amphibious landing at Cap Haitien along Haiti's northern shore. In addition, a carrier battle group, consisting of the *USS Eisenhower* and supporting ships stood ready to assist. A second carrier, the *USS America*, was in position off the Ile de la Gonaves. On the *America*, instead of the carrier's normal contingent of aircraft, army helicopters lined the decks, ready to airlift special operations forces into action. A wide array of close air support (CAS) assets were being positioned to provide nearly immediate fire support to ground forces.

The plan of attack, whose objective was to destroy quickly all opposition and establish immediate control over the nation in a **coup de main**, called for thirty C-141 aircraft to approach Port-Au-Prince from the north, descend to a jump altitude of 1100 feet, and drop their paratroops. The 82nd Airborne Division's drop zones included the main airport at PAP and a large grazing area north of the city designated Pegasus DZ. The Rangers were to parachute onto a drop zone fifteen or twenty miles south of PAP to secure an area to be used as a Forward Air Refueling Point (FARP) for helicopters carrying troops from the *America*. Following the Rangers, a flight of sixty C-141s would conduct a heavy drop with the necessary equipment and fuel to establish the FARP. Controlling the airport and dock facilities at PAP was absolutely critical to the arrival of follow-on forces. Furthermore, Port au Prince's political and economic importance to the rest of Haiti made it the clear center of gravity.

The Carter-Cedras agreement at the eleventh hour brought the invasion plans to a abrupt halt and forced military planners to fall back to their permissive entry plan, OPLAN 2380, for the return of Aristide. That OPLAN 2370 could be terminated while in the process of being executed and an alternate plan implemented almost simultaneously says much about the command and control sophistication of the American military.

Special Forces soldiers from 3rd SFG(A) had been included in the original 2370 plan as part of the invasion force and were alerted for deployment on 8 September 1995. They were to provide the majority of the command and control structure for the Army Special Operations Task Force (ARSOTF). Most of 3rd SFG(A) forces would have arrived at D+1 by MH-53J helicopters from GTMO. The permissive entry plan did not change fundamentally either the mission or schedule of arrival for the group's soldiers.

The ARSOTF mission statement and OPLAN 2380 specified that SOF elements in support of Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY were to:

conduct special operations, civil military operations, and coalition support in Haiti in support of MNF-Haiti to maintain a stable and secure environment to facilitate the transition of the new government of Haiti (GOH) to functional governance and to participate as required in the United Nations Mission In Haiti (UNMIH). On order, handover military operations to designated UNMIH forces and redeploy.

Port-Au-Prince received the lion's share of the U.S. military's attention. Responsibility for securing the countryside would fall to the ARSOTF and was considered an economy of force operation.³⁷ The ARSOTF's mission was considered as a five stage operation. During Phase I, which commenced on alert notification, US forces would begin the process of establishing and moving forces to staging areas. This phase would be considered complete once JTF forces were in position to deploy and ISBs were operational. Phase II was the initial deployment and commencement of security operations as well as the various different facets of the information and psyop campaign. The focus of US forces during this stage would be to create a stable environment in the nation's key urban centers and subsequently move the US presence into rural areas. US planners believed that

³⁷See Major General George A. Fisher, Interviewed by Major J. Burton Thompson, Jr., 8 May 1995, USASOC History and Archives, Ft. Bragg, NC.

this phase of the operation had to be executed as rapidly as possible to minimize the disruption caused by the breakdown of the established power structure. Phase III would be a period of consolidation. As part of the process, the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) in the JTF 190 headquarters would initiate an assessment process for later civil military operations aimed at rebuilding the national infrastructure. Special Forces teams were to vet and professionalize Haiti's police and military once a satisfactory program could be agreed upon with the Aristide government. Once US forces were in position across the country and civil order restored, this phase would be considered complete.

Phase IV would be driven by the results of the assessments being conducted by Civil Affairs and Special Forces soldiers. It was assumed that the United Nations embargo would be lifted at the start of Phase II. Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Private Volunteer Organizations (PVO) would be available to begin the process of rebuilding the country while US forces and a growing contingent of United Nations forces would maintain peace and safety. The UNMIH would continue to build its operational and logistics strength during this period in preparation for assuming full control of the operation. During Phase V the UNMIH would be fully operational, permitting the redeployment of the majority of US forces to CONUS.³⁸

Parts of the mission statement were unclear due largely to the change in entry scenarios. The stated task of creating a "safe and secure environment" carried with it the assumption that law enforcement would be a problem. Under the 2370 plan, it was a stated assumption that it would be necessary to dismantle then rebuild the Forces Armee d'Haiti (*FAD'H*) police and military in order to create order. Past human rights abuses by the *FAD'H* had made the operation necessary in the first place. Under the Carter-Cedras Agreement, the *FAD'H* were to be left in place. For Special Forces, this presented the daunting challenge of finding a way to work with and professionalize the very organization that U.S. forces were targeting for destruction under the forced entry plan. In addition, the people of Haiti viewed the *FAD'H* as the foremost oppressors of human rights in the country and held the organization in contempt. Their expectations were that if United States soldiers did not bring retribution to the soldiers of the *FAD'H*, the Americans would at least have sense enough to allow Haitians themselves mete out justice to the uniformed thugs of the former regime. These were the kinds of problems waiting for

³⁸Message from CINCUSACOM, 111915Z Sep 94, Subject: CONPLAN 2380, 7-9.

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3rd SFG(A) and its commander, Colonel Mark Boyatt, as it prepared for deployment.

COL Mark Boyatt assumed command of 3rd SFG(A) in July 1994, well after plans existed for 3rd Group's involvement in Operation Restore Democracy. Boyatt's understanding of the problem involved with operations in Haiti was different from the doctrinal approach normally applied to FID operations. Boyatt quickly understood that although Aristide returned to Haiti on 15 October 1994, nonetheless, nothing approaching a working government existed. Special Forces teams working in the countryside were effectively alone, dependent on guidance from the JSOTF and their own good judgment in conducting the affairs of government. In many respects, the operational environment more closely approximated an Unconventional Warfare environment than anything else. Although considerably removed from the guerrilla operations US SOF forces conducted during World War II in Burma, the Philippines, France, Italy, and the Balkans, nonetheless, the skills and operational awareness factors were similar.

Boyatt cautioned his soldiers that it was time to change their mindset and understand that the OPLAN that had brought them to Haiti was effectively overcome by events. Special Forces teams would have to go back to their UW background for the skills and awareness necessary for success. Building rapport with the communities in which they were garrisoned was the first step. It would also be necessary to carry on what amounted to low level source operations to understand the nature of the threat existing in their area. A good threat analysis was crucial to the task of building rapport because the more intensely teams focused on security issues, the less they were able to work on their relationship with the community.

Boyatt's presence was to be constant across the scope of the campaign. He made almost daily runs to his dispersed teams and kept them focused through the use of nightly radio messages. In these messages, he more than once reminded his soldiers that they had to adhere to the orders of higher headquarters, not only because Special Forces soldiers were consummate professionals but also because anything less would reflect unfavorably on Special Forces in general and on 3rd SFG(A) in particular. Most Special Forces soldiers believed (not without good cause) that some of the general orders were geared toward the lowest common denominator in the military population and were insulted by the clear implication that Special Forces soldiers, regardless of their maturity and training, were not to be trusted. Boyatt did his best to shield his soldiers from the more difficult aspects of working with 10th Mountain Division. Nonetheless, soldiers

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who stepped beyond the bonds, he referred to as "Werewolves" and he made it clear that he would use his "silver bullets" to silence them. To drive home this point, Boyatt did not hesitate to relieve and return to the states a team leader and team sergeant found to have violated General Orders concerning the consumption of alcoholic beverages in December 1994. No unit employed in support of Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY achieved as much lasting impact as that of 3rd SFG(A) and behind the achievements of his soldiers, was their Group commander quietly and professionally piloting their efforts.

The 3rd Group's deployment did not flow smoothly, due in part to changes in the original operations plan that expanded the group's participation from one battalion to the entire group. Not since DESERT STORM and PROVIDE COMFORT had an entire group deployed for an on-going mission. Moving men and materials to staging areas became a nightmare as the group struggled with the demands of attempting to self deploy while at the same time being held responsible for post support requirements. The support company's assets were particularly strained as the same soldiers whose job it was to pack and track palletized equipment also were needed to establish the forward support base (FSB) at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base (GTMO). Drivers and TCs to drive seventy vehicles to the port of departure at Charleston, SC, had to be found. "It did not hit us between the eyes with a 2 x 4 until two days before it was time to launch...that we were broken," noted COL Mark Boyatt, 3rd SFG(A)'s commander.³⁹ Air movement from Fort Bragg proved to be no easier for 3rd SFG(A) soldiers as Air Force C-5As turned in a poor performance, stalling troop deployments with frequent breakdowns. After repeated requests for assistance, USASOC finally became involved and assisted the group's deployment to GTMO which occurred from 10-18 September 1994.

Support personnel established a Forward Operations Base (FOB) at GTMO on 10 September and began to accept the deployment of 2-3 SFG(A) shortly thereafter. As additional units followed, A-team commanders implemented an intense period of pre-mission training.

Getting the group and its supporting assets to GTMO proved to be only the first part of the transportation problem. Once the Carter-Cedras agreement made a forced entry unnecessary, 3rd Group personnel found that making the final leap from GTMO to Haiti presented unforeseen challenges. The problem plaguing the

³⁹COL Mark Boyatt, "3rd SFG(A) in Operation Uphold Democracy," 25 May 1995, USASOC History and Archives, Ft. Bragg, NC., 3.

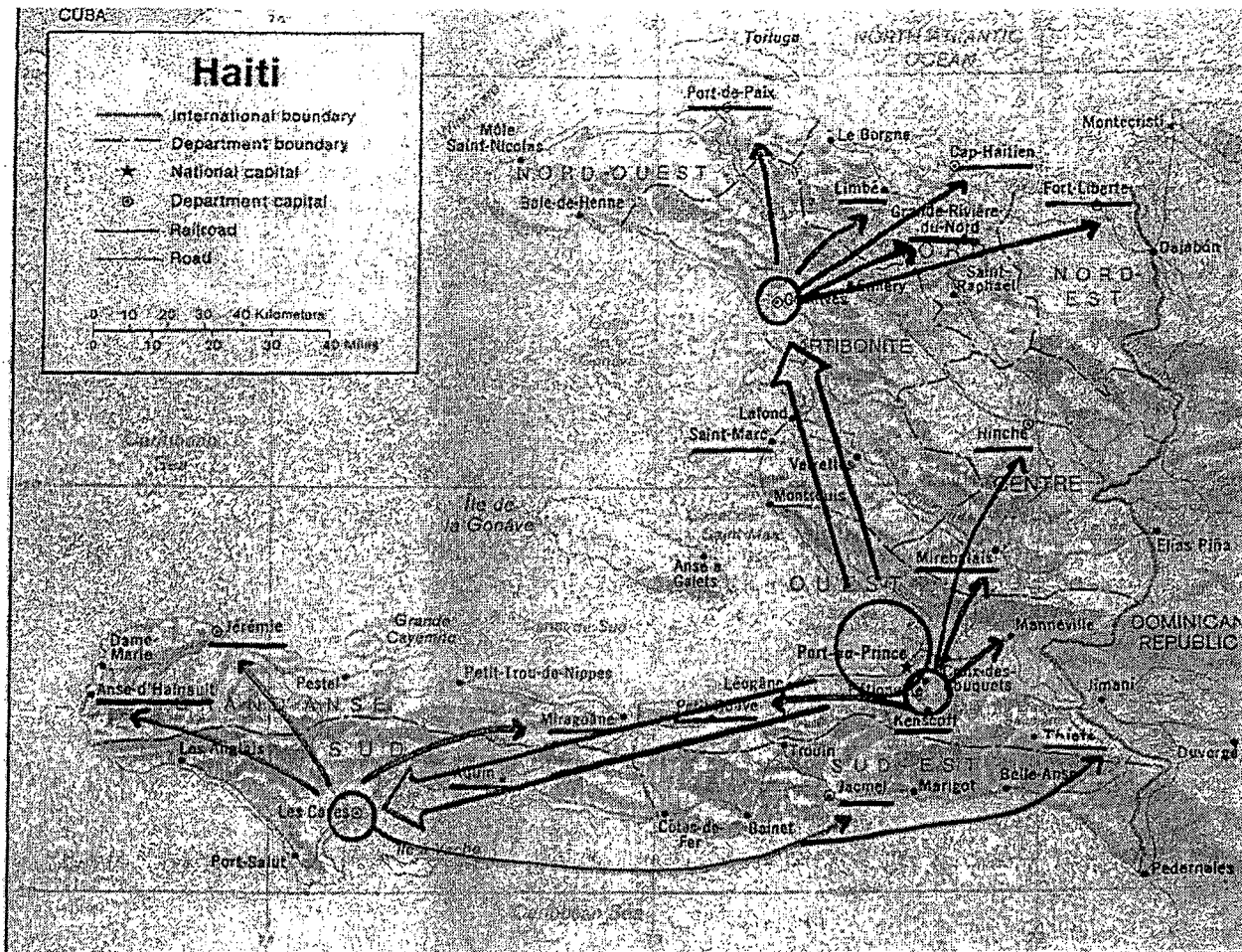
move was that Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) had warned Atlantic Command (ACOM) planners that the Time Phased Forces Deployment Data (TPFDD) would need to be redone in the event the OPLAN changed to insure that all units slated for deployment under the permissive entry plan could be properly scheduled for transportation. The rapid change from forced to permissive entry plans along with the Clinton administration's decision to go ahead with the buildup regardless of the TPFDD problem created anticipated difficulties with transportation and support. The combat service support (CSS) structure was severely strained to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing number of soldiers. At D+12 the CSS structure had only reached levels anticipated to exist at D+3.⁴⁰ The 3rd SFG() was especially affected by these problems as it simply dropped off the TPFDD once the invasion aircraft were canceled. It became necessary to re-input 3rd SFG(A) into the TPFDD. When TRANSCOM made it clear that it would require an additional week to deploy the unit to Haiti from GTMO, 3rd Group, operating through JTF Haiti, asked for and received aviation support from a Joint Special Operations Task Force.

Elements of 3rd SFG(A) began arriving at PAP on 20 September 1994 although movement beyond the airport's perimeter took several days. Special Forces soldiers endured the oppressive heat and humidity on the airport grounds. Some of the teams used the wings of derelict planes parked off the runway for shade. Conditions at the airport were less than ideal with limited water and sanitation facilities to accommodate the large numbers of soldiers living within its perimeter.

Responsibility for securing PAP fell to 10th Mountain Division. Ensuring the stability of outlying areas of Haiti, with the exception of Cap Haitien, was the mission of the Joint Special Operations Task Force.⁴¹ What BG Richard Potter envisioned for 3rd SFG(A)'s employment was a series of "Hub and Spoke" operations with 2-3rd Special Forces battalion leading the way. (See Map #3) The plan began with one of the ODBs deploying by helicopter to secure Camp D'Application, the site of the critically important FAD'H heavy weapons company. After Special Forces soldiers had secured the garrison complex, LTC Gary M. Jones inserted FOB 32 on the site while three other ODBs occupied

⁴⁰CPT Nancy C. Henderson, "Civil Affairs and Logistics in Haiti," *Army Logistician*, (May-June 1996), 21.

⁴¹The Joint Special Operations Task Force and the Army Special Operations Task Force were nearly synonymous terms. At the beginning of the operation when all of key staff elements and the commanding general were Army personnel, the organization was known as the ARSOTF. Other terms were used as well. These included Task Force Black and Task Force Raleigh. Later, with the arrival of Rear Admiral Thomas Richards to replace BG Richard Potter, the headquarters was identified as the JSOTF. The staff also was affected by the change of command, as Admiral Richards brought a number of his own staff officers to replace the initial Army contingent from Ft. Bragg, NC.



HUB AND SPOKE

Gonaives, Cap Haitian, and Jacmel.⁴² Once these B-teams had established a presence in these cities, 3-3rd Special Forces battalion would begin deployment. The initial plan called for FOB 32 to retain responsibility for most of Haiti south of PAP and FOB 33 to assume responsibility for the country's northern claw. As the demands of the operation became clearer, it became necessary for COL Boyatt to order the deployment of his last battalion, 1-3 SFG(A). Under the command of LTC Willilam J. Kay, 1st battalion established FOB 31 in Les Cayes and assumed responsibility for operations in the southern claw.

⁴²A Forward Operations Base is the equivalent of a conventional army battalion Tactical Operations Center. Its role is to provide command and control to the company elements or ODBs task organized under its control.

For many ODAs, the movement from a forced entry plan to a permissive entry plan amplified concerns over how they were to infiltrate the various *FAD'H* garrisons located across the country. One worry was whether those garrisons would accept guidance from the *FAD'H* leadership in PAP and allow the Americans to take over without a fight. CPT Robert Bevelaqua, commanding officer of ODA 336, was particularly worried about how he was going to approach the *FAD'H* garrison in Les Cayes. Under OPLAN 2370, the response of the *FAD'H* garrison was assumed to be hostile and assets were made available to deal with the contingency. According to the plan, Bevelaqua and his ten man team were to conduct a hostile infiltration against a two hundred man garrison. To even the odds, an AC-130 SPECTRE gunship was to provide on-call fire support. Bevelaqua's guidance was to access the situation from the air. If it was clear that the *FAD'H* garrison had assumed a defensive posture, then he was authorized to utilize his fire support to reduce the positions. As things turned out, the gunship proved unnecessary. Had it been used, the results would have been less than desirable. Thanks largely to inadequate intelligence, one of the buildings on the compound turned out to be a jail containing a sizable number of prisoners.⁴³

According to the permissive entry plan, the Les Cayes garrison was to receive an order from *FAD'H* headquarters in PAP to expect the arrival of US Army "Green Berets" on 27 September, and the garrison's officers were to cooperate fully with the Americans. Bevelaqua found little comfort in this approach. The garrison would know how many men he had and when he was to arrive. The element of surprise simply did not exist under the new plan. Furthermore, his team had been directed to land in a soccer field not far from the garrison headquarters. The field was surrounded by an extremely large wall, a location made to order for an ambush. Bevelaqua voiced his concerns over the selection of the LZ and managed to get the infiltration changed to the alternate LZ. The uncertain loyalty of the *FAD'H* officers in Les Cayes also led to an increase in the size of the infiltration force. Instead of one ODA, Bevelaqua found himself commanding three ODAs in addition to his own.

Bevelaqua's element arrived in Les Cayes on two CH-47s, with one of the helicopters carrying a sling loaded HMMWV. Six reporters accompanied Bevelaqua and his men.⁴⁴ At first the

⁴³CPT Robert S. Bevelaqua, Interview by MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, 20 Oct. 94, transcript, USASOC History and Archives, Ft Bragg, NC, 1-2.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 5-6.

young captain was dubious about the reporters accompanying the infiltration but later found them to be a blessing in disguise. Although he refused to allow them access to his operations room, he gave them permission to accompany his men on patrol. Bevelaqua saw them as an opportunity to dispel old myths concerning the Army in general and Special Forces in particular. "The reasons" for including them in our patrols were "to validate a situation," noted Bevelaqua.

If you have a camera, you can do it. And the press is not one sided. They will tell the actual story. If they hear it from CPT Bevelaqua's mouth back home, well it's just a guy out of the Army, with his own conservative political views. But when the press gets hold of something and the people can see it in the paper, it's more legitimate.⁴⁵

The guidance Bevelaqua as well as the rest of the 3rd SFG(A)'s detachment commanders received from BG Potter and COL Boyatt was that they should "get in bed with the FAD'H" to the point where they would know everything the FAD'H was doing.⁴⁶ As a minimum, the idea was to disrupt the decision making process and, ideally, to influence it.

Bevelaqua quickly found out that his "bed partner" had a very unsavory side. Soon after his soldiers arrived at the garrison, one of his soldiers informed him that there was a jail on the garrison grounds in a building that had been mistakenly identified as a storage facility. Along with his entourage of reporters, Bevelaqua and his men inspected the facility. The sights and smells that awaited them were anything but pleasant. The building consisted of four dimly lit cells one of which contained thirty-five prisoners. The men positioned close to the bars had extended their feet through the bars to gain a little additional room. Some of the prisoners looked like they were suffering from elephantiasis. All had insect infestations of various kinds and most suffered from open sores and blisters. The guards provided a simple bucket for urination and defecation.⁴⁷

One of the prisoners made a point of telling the Americans that there was one prisoner who needed immediate attention.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷Ibid., 7-8.

Lying on the floor hidden by most of the rest of the now standing prisoners was an emaciated man. With some help, the prisoners picked the man from the floor. The sight was reminiscent of something one would have seen at Dachau or Buchenwald. The skin on the man's buttocks and lower portion of his back had been largely eaten away. Lower sections of his vertebrae were clearly evident. Yellow pus oozed from the open wound. One of the reporters looked at Belevaqua and asked, "What are you going to do?" The captain responded that he was probably going to upset some people but he intended to get the problem fixed.⁴⁸

When he confronted *FAD'H* officers with the conditions of the jail, their response was to admit that conditions were awful but blamed the Red Cross for not feeding and taking care of the prisoners. One *FAD'H* officer explained that the police were only responsible for guarding the jail. The Red Cross was to feed and cloth the prisoners, and the district attorney was to provide them with the necessary funds. Barely controlling his anger, Bevelaqua snapped back at the *FAD'H* officer, "You get the District Attorney and you get the Red Cross tomorrow morning, and I'm going to drag them through those f***ing cells. And if they don't understand what the problem is in there, and that human beings can't live in there like that, we'll put them in there for a little while and let them see what it is all about."⁴⁹

Bevelaqua reported his situation to MAJ Tony Schwamm, commander of ODB 320, who forwarded the matter to the JSOTF. The following day, BG Potter along with a *FAD'H* general in charge of their Inspector General office arrived to inspect the area and establish the validity of the captain's report. After exchanging salutes, Potter remarked, "You painted a pretty dismal picture last night. I hope it's that dismal."⁵⁰ Bevelaqua assured him that it was that bad and then some. The three officers along with additional security made their way to the jail. The District Attorney and a representative of the Red Cross joined them enroute. Once inside, it took Potter only moments to realize that the CPT had not exaggerated. Turning to the *FAD'H* general, Potter made his disgust clear. With his index finger nearly thumping the man's chest, Potter announced in a loud voice, "Human beings cannot live like this. Men are treated equally regardless of the crime they have committed. You must

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 9.

⁵⁰Ibid., 13.

fix this problem. You must fix this problem now!"⁵¹ The fact that Bevelaqua's men were present with MP5s and M-16A2s at the ready served to underscore the general's intentions. The three sides listened then resumed their discussion as to whose responsibility it was to correct the problem. Potter lost his patience. Interjecting one last time, Potter looked at the *FAD'H* officers as well as the Red Cross and the District Attorney and told the group to "fix it!" Turning to Bevelaqua, he said, "You monitor it. I want to know how it gets fixed and I want to know how long it takes."⁵²

Fixing conditions in the jail proved to be easier than figuring out who should actually be there in the first place. When Bevelaqua asked to see records on the prisoners in order to determine how much of their sentences each of them had served, he found that no paperwork existed. Jail was often a one way street. An accused prisoner went to trial, was convicted, and then disappeared into the prison system never to return.⁵³ Bevelaqua and his men eventually settled into an uneasy relationship with the *FAD'H* leadership in Les Cayes.

In other areas around the country, other Special Forces units had similar stories to relate regarding the initial infiltration. In Gonaives, the original plan called for MAJ Mark O'Neill to infiltrate his company, ODB 370, by air and then quickly seize control of the *FAD'H* garrison located in the center of town. As in Les Cayes, one AC 130 SPECTER gunship would be on station to provide immediate fire support if the situation deteriorated. An ODB is, by its structure, very top heavy with senior leaders. The organization never was configured to operate as an infantry company. Betting on the professionalism of his soldiers, O'Neill simply restructured his company to mirror that of a raid patrol. Instead of six ODAs, O'Neill formed three teams, one for security, one for fire support, and one for assault and breaching operations, and he gave his team leaders free rein to organize themselves as they saw fit around the mission objectives. During rehearsals, O'Neill tested the teams by running them through a wide range of possible contingencies.

O'Neill's solution to the problem of approaching the garrison building, assuming that the movement from the LZ to the vicinity of the building went without problem, was to position

⁵¹Ibid., 14.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 15.

his fire support and assault elements where they could best engage the building. He had no intention of keeping their locations a secret. Instead, he hoped to convince the garrison that it was facing an overwhelming array of firepower and that resistance would be suicidal. O'Neill then intended literally to knock on the front door and offer the defenders a choice of "Bible or bullet." Should the garrison decide to resist, the building along with its occupants would be reduced to rubble.⁵⁴

As things developed, O'Neill never had to test his plan. Along with a small security element, O'Neill landed in Gonaives while the rest of his company and his air support orbited overhead. The garrison commander quickly realized he was overmatched and elected to obey his orders. He invited O'Neill to land the rest of his men and ordered his own soldiers to cooperate fully with the Americans.

During the infiltration, O'Neill and his men reaped the benefits of a small but powerfully symbolic act by one of his sergeants. On the LZ, *FAD'H* soldiers/police were working to restrain the large number of people who had gathered to witness the arrival of the Americans. Following old practices, one of the soldiers began to beat a man with a night stick. A nearby Special Forces soldier grabbed the stick from his hand and threw it aside. The crowd cheered the action. Whatever apprehension had been present among the people of Gonaives regarding the arrival of the Americans soon disappeared beneath a sea of good will. Without exception, the Special Forces soldiers who arrived in the backwater towns of Haiti found themselves welcomed.⁵⁵

O'Neill was not content simply to build a friendly relationship with the local population. He was concerned that the arrival of the Americans would produce an outbreak of looting much as happened in Cap Haitian once it was clear that the *FAD'H* no longer had any power. To maintain control of the situation, O'Neill decided to make extensive use of his Tactical Psyop Teams (TPT) and Civil Affairs Combat Support Teams (CST) to get the message out that the Americans intended to maintain law and order in Gonaives as a preliminary step to improving the lives of local inhabitants. Part of the problem facing O'Neill was that few Haitians had any understanding of what "democracy" meant. For a minority, freedom meant that they could do anything they wanted

⁵⁴MAJ Mark P. O'Neill, Interview by MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, 12 October 94, transcript, USASOC History and Archives, Ft Bragg, NC, 4-6.

⁵⁵Miscellaneous notes of MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, 13 October 94, USASOC History and Archives, Ft. Bragg, NC.

to those they believed associated with the old regime. To attack this problem at its root, O'Neill became very pro-active in his use of psyops. "Psyops," he noted, "were my non-lethal fires ...so I used the shit out of those guys."⁵⁶ Prepackaged leaflets were useful but even more important were the use of loud speakers and locally produced products. Messages designed to stop Haitian on Haitian violence, keep people in their homes at night, and other themes were instrumental in O'Neill's men gaining quick control over the situation.

At the beginning of Phase III operations, the JSOTF had FOBs operating at Les Cayes, Camp D'Application, and Gonaives. The primary mission for each was to create an immediate presence in each of the three major cities and then gradually spread that sense of presence to the villages and hamlets of the countryside with the intention of creating a safe and secure environment for the return of President Aristide.⁵⁷ BG Potter explained to his commanders that they needed to dampen the expectations of many Haitians who had come to see the arrival of American forces as the solution to their problems. "Emphasize that we will help Haitians, but we will not do the job for them," he explained.⁵⁸

One of the primary concerns facing Special Forces planners was that the displacement of Haiti's former power elites might set the stage for the rise of an insurgency capable of eventually toppling the democratically elected government of Haiti. Leadership for such an undertaking might come from either the military or the FAH'D. An active campaign to vet *FAD'H* garrisons as a preliminary step to creating a stable police force became critical to justifying the US presence in Haiti. Circumventing the development of an insurgency movement also required that the Haitian people view the arrival of American forces positively and see the intervention of Haiti as preliminary for a better future for Haiti. An aggressive civil affairs and psychological operations effort became critical to creating this perception.

These US imperatives proved to be challenging. For soldiers working in field, the movement to Phase III created a degree of confusion. Because of the Carter Accords, the notion that FAH'D and FRAPH elements would be considered the enemy was no longer official policy even though the interpretation in the hinterland remained exactly that. One ODA in Ft. Liberté noted the problem:

⁵⁶O'Neill interview, 9.

⁵⁷Command and Staff Briefing, 8 October 1994.

⁵⁸Ibid.

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The current assessment of the situation is that we don't really know who the enemy is. A basic statement can be made that on the average, a FRAPH attache is a black man with Ray Ban sunglasses, clean clothes and well fed, but that in and of itself doesn't say a hell of a lot.⁵⁹

Special Forces soldiers were no more clear on what the intentions were of the *FAD'H* garrisons in their town. The assumption 3rd SFG(A) carried into the mission was that the *FAD'H* would continue to exist as an organization. Past corruption as well as human rights abuses made it necessary to vet the organization if anything approaching popular legitimacy was to be achieved. This, the 3rd Group was prepared to do. Yet, Aristide's intentions for the organization were not known but the perception was that a deal had been worked out with the United States in which the continued existence of the *FAD'H* was taken as a given. In his public statements both before and after his arrival, the theme he consistently stressed was that of reconciliation.⁶⁰ For *FAD'H* garrisons across the country, Aristide's return appeared to offer the prospect of continuing their place in Haitian society albeit with their power limited considerably. As events developed, the assumption that selected *FAD'H* soldiers would be able to continue serving as police or soldiers appeared to some Special Forces soldiers to be a conscious deception on the part of Aristide.⁶¹

Special Forces units received instructions in October to begin the process of vetting *FAD'H* garrisons as a first step toward getting an interim police security force (IPSF) in place and operating while a new police force was trained in Port-Au-Prince or Cap Haitian. Recruits for the new police force were to come from the vetted *FAD'H* as well as from other elements in Haiti's population. The vetted *FAD'H* were to attend a six day course in basic police duties, receive a new uniform and identity card, and then be sent back to their duty stations to serve as police until notified of their selection for the four month long course that would lead to assignment to the permanent police.⁶²

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Major Mark O'Neill, Interviewed by Dr. Joseph R. Fischer 15 April 1995, USASOC History, Ft. Bragg, NC, 1.

⁶¹Major O'Neill stated that the treatment of the vetted *FAD'H* made it clear that "it was never his [Aristide's] intentions in the first place" to use any of the police remaining from the old regime. Ibid., 2.

⁶²Ibid., 4-5.

A few of the six day courses that did meet were attended largely by vetted *FAD'H*. With the implication being that the Aristide government would be true to its word and permit honest police to continue in their former jobs, morale increased. In Gonaives, ODB 370 found that members of the local garrison had a new interest in their jobs. Special Forces soldiers provided classes in first aid, basic communications, English, and other classes considered to be non-offensive in nature.⁶³ [Insert photo from Gonaives here] Only after it began to be clear that there would be no follow through on the promises did morale once again begin to fall.

The first promise the Aristide government failed to keep was that of issuing uniforms to the IPSF.⁶⁴ The second indicator that the program was in danger was the tendency of the Aristide government to ignore the list of vetted *FAD'H* that Special Forces soldiers had painstakingly developed.⁶⁵ The final blow fell when the training school was suspended and guidance issued to place all untrained vetted *FAD'H* police on indefinite leave. Out of approximately 6,000 *FAD'H* police, 2,500 still remained to be vetted as of 25 January 1995. Accompanying the guidance were reassurances that this was only a temporary measure and that the interim course would be restarted after the Christmas and New Year holidays.⁶⁶

The response in many *FAD'H* garrisons was increasingly hostile. In some places, intelligence sources inside the local population began to hint that some of the garrisons were considering taking action against the Americans. The Aristide government responded by trying to place even greater controls on the garrisons, to include having the Special Forces detachments run daily *FAD'H* accountability formations.⁶⁷ The Special Forces teams did not consider the possibility that a garrison would take action against them to be a great threat because from the first days of the operation, the Special Forces teams stationed at or near each garrison controlled *FAD'H* arms rooms. It proved difficult for Special Forces detachments to keep an accurate

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 7.

⁶⁷Ibid., 7.

count of the garrisons because many of the police simply opted not to come to work. Those who did, returned to an earlier approach of doing as little as possible while their fates were being determined elsewhere. This produced two results. First, once again, primary responsibility for security fell on the shoulders of Special Forces soldiers. Secondly, the *FAD'H*'s inactivity provided a reasonable justification for the Aristide government to argue for their dismissal since their lack of performance was proof positive that they were worthless. According to MAJ O'Neill, members of the Aristide government, speaking on radio talk shows, increasingly referred to the garrisons as a "cancer" that needed to be "cut out."⁶⁸ The government sought to reassure the public that it would take the steps necessary to eliminate the problem.⁶⁹ The vetted *FAD'H* were being "set up to fail," argued O'Neill.⁷⁰

Each ODB and ODA responded to the confused state of affairs in its own way. In some areas such as Les Cayes, past experience with the *FAD'H*, to include the shooting of SSG Donald Holstead in October 1994, made it necessary to maintain a heightened sense of security. One ODA was tasked to remain with the *FAD'H* garrison in town while the ODB and several ODAs resided in a nearby home, protected by a walls, gates, and an armed guard. With the FOB located at the American University of the Caribbean less than two miles away, reinforcements were only minutes away.

In Camp D'Application, the FOB's location in the *FAD'H* training facilities lent a degree of security that was not present for the FOBs located in Gonaives and Les Cayes. Situated in the hills outside Port-Au-Prince, the old *FAD'H* garrison remained quiet throughout the campaign.

The city of Gonaives was a different matter. Located on a mud-flat on Haiti's eastern coast north of Port-Au-Prince, the city had been the center for anti-Cedras activity and the scene of rioting around the CARE warehouse facilities located there. For LTC Dave Schorer, the 3rd battalion commander, the problem was one of how to insure the safety of the CARE warehouse while staying near enough to his ODB, located with the *FAD'H* detachment in the center of town, to reinforce it if necessary. He solved the problem by positioning his headquarters in a walled home within minutes of both the CARE facility and the *FAD'H* garrison.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰Ibid.



For most soldiers, figuring out who was the enemy presented considerable challenge. Almost without exception, Haitians gave an overwhelmingly positive reception to the arrival of SOF soldiers in their area. Word spread very quickly that not all American soldiers were equal. Among the local population, it became known that soldiers wearing the crossed bayonets of the 10th

Mountain Division were cold and not to be trusted, while soldiers wearing the sword with three lightening bolts were truly there to help. In each and every village ODAs entered, they were met by waving hands and smiles. In celebration for what they believed would be the immediate return of Aristide, many villages turned out in almost instantaneous "manifestations."⁷¹ [See photo] Hidden in the crowds were FRAPH members and ex-attaches who were not happy about the presence of American troops and who understood that the unpopularity of the American occupation in the United States might be turned to their advantage if they could only kill or wound several American soldiers. With the United States withdrawal from Somalia to draw on, U.S. intelligence sources provided early warning that some elements friendly to the old regime might attempt to engage Americans in the hope that the Clinton administration would lack the backbone to continue the operation in the wake of casualties.

The problem of security was met in a number of different ways. For 10th Mountain Division, the solution was to adopt an approach learned the hard way in the dusty villages of Somalia and on the streets of Mogadishu, one which emphasized pure cold steel and kevlar. Haitians in Port-Au-Prince and Cap Hatian frequently saw 10th Mountain's soldiers patrolling the streets at the ready. Security from a Special Forces perspective took a decidedly different tack. At the insistence of BG Potter, who negotiated the terms of his own command's permissive entry between 20-23 September 94 with the FAD'H, SOF soldiers were to

⁷¹A "manifestation" is an instantaneous street celebration, usually complete with people playing musical instruments and chanting political slogans. The size and scope of the celebration may range from a few zealots to hundreds of people who jam the streets. The celebrations usually brought all travel and commerce to a stop. Although manifestations usually were happy events, on more than one occasion crowds would take on a mob mentality, focusing their frustration and anger on perceived villains associated with the old regime.

be permitted to adopt a different approach to security.⁷² With MG Meade's approval, Potter's approach was to create a "non-hostile, nonaggressive appearance." The Kevlar helmets and body armor quickly disappeared into duffel bags, replaced by soft caps and fatigues. Unlike the 10th Mountain Division, SOF soldiers made it a practice to establish rapport with the people. In an approach not unlike that of the pacification program Special Forces carried out in the Republic of Vietnam, Special Forces relied on its ability to win over the "hearts and minds" of the local population as a force protection measure. The fact that most Haitians saw US forces as liberators made this approach possible. Once it became clear to Haitians that US concern was genuine, locals became a valuable source of information and came increasingly to depend on their own detachment of American soldiers for security. Special Forces soldiers simply never gave their opposition a chance to develop a viable insurgency.

There was price for adopting the more vulnerable posture. The wounding of SSG Holsted in Les Cayes on 2 October and the killing of SFC Gregory D. Cardott and wounding of SSG Davis in Gonaives on 12 January 1995 were the only instances of US soldiers being effectively engaged during the entire operation. COL Boyatt and his staff quickly came to the conclusion that Holsted inadvertently had interrupted a planned attack on the compound. He had gone behind the compound to relieve himself when he was attacked by several intruders. Caught by surprise, Holsted found himself with a gun in his back. Believing he was about to be shot anyway, he quickly turned his body. His captor fired the gun wounding Holsted. Seriously but not fatally wounded, Holsted was able to get off a couple of shots at the now fleeing men.

The following morning, as Special Forces soldiers investigated the scene, it became clear that Holsted's attackers had bigger objectives in mind. They intended to conduct a grenade attack against the Americans sleeping in the compound. Mixed with the fragmentation grenades would be CS gas, and the attack would be made in conjunction with a power outage. The combined effect of this was probably to force the soldiers out of the building and into the open where a few well hidden gunman could engage the Americans.⁷³

The response to Holsted's shooting was quick and overwhelming. One company of Rangers appeared on the scene from

⁷²Misc. notes of MAJ Joseph R. Fischer.

⁷³COL Mark Boyatt's "Fireside Chats," dated 4 October 94.

GTMO the following morning looking for all the world like the apocalypse had arrived. Dressed in full battle dress, they patrolled the streets of Les Cayes for a week. As part of the search for the gunmen, the Rangers broke down the doors of several *FAD'H* officer's quarters suspected of being involved in the shooting. When Cedras queried LTG Shelton, the JTF Commanding General about the happenings in Les Cayes, Shelton made it clear in no uncertain terms that he would not tolerate any move against Americans. To preclude the possibility, Boyatt informed his detachment leaders that he intended to do more than just monitor the *FAD'H* garrisons. He instructed team leaders that they were "to detain key leaders of FRAPH and Attaches identified as instigating violence."⁷⁴ Information regarding weapons caches were to be energetically investigated. Whenever Special Forces soldiers discovered weapons, the caches were to be seized immediately. Potter and Boyatt adopted a more pro-active approach, one designed to get inside and disrupt their opponent's decision making process. The efforts bore fruit. No further organized attempts were made against the lives of Special Forces soldiers in Haiti.⁷⁵

In the north, the shooting that claimed the life of Cardott clearly was not an incident that had been planned by the leadership of the old *FAD'H*. On 12 January 1995, SFC Greagory Cardott and SSG Tom Davis along with Mr. Baptiste, their Haitian interpreter, and a local Haitian work crew, were working near the southern toll booth in Gonaives. While they were working, a white 1994 Ford Ranger pick-up truck approached the toll booth. Rather than stopping, the truck proceeded past the booth. The Haitian toll booth attendant asked the Americans for assistance. Cardott and Davis gave chase in their HMMWV, forcing the pick-up to come to a stop 1/4 mile from the booth. Cardott stepped in front and slightly to the right center of the truck while Davis assumed a position where he could provide cover. The driver, a

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Some question has arisen over what official US policy was toward the FRAPH. Accusations have been made that Special Forces soldiers were instructed to treat FRAPH as if it were just another political party similar to that of the Republicans and Democrats in the United States and that this policy originated with BG Potter. The facts appear to contradict these allegations. Special Forces units were engaged in an active campaign to collect party rosters and other information on Haitians belonging to or associated with the FRAPH at the time of Holsted's shooting. This policy changed, but the change does not appear to have come from either BG Potter or COL Boyatt. On 8 October 94 in the evening Command and Staff meeting, Potter made it clear to Boyatt and the assembled 3rd SFG(A) battalion commanders that FRAPH was to be considered a "registered political party." Nonetheless, he went on to emphasize that he considered them to be "a bunch of thugs." He instructed Boyatt and his battalion commanders that he wanted them to have a "heart to heart" with local FRAPH leaders and expected them to lean on them hard. Potter's intent was that Special Forces soldiers get inside the FRAPH decision making process and disrupt it. Misc. notes of MAJ Fischer, dated 8 October 94.

Mr. Brudent, refused to pay the toll on being informed that the toll was now required. His passenger, a Mr. Frederick, who had been a former officer in the *FAD'H* and now owner of an import-export business in PAP quickly became unruly. Cardott continued to insist that he would need to return to the toll booth and pay the fine. Apparently failing to get his message across through the interpreter, Cardott found it necessary to have Davis handcuff Frederick. Davis opened the door to the vehicle but Frederick refused to cooperate. Believing that Frederick was about to resist arrest, Cardott sprayed him with pepper spray. Frederick kicked Davis in the groin forcing Davis to fall back away from the vehicle. At the same time, Frederick produced a hidden pistol and fired. The bullet hit Davis in the right biceps, breaking his arm. Frederick then fired at Cardott striking him in the heart. When the mortally wounded Cardott dropped his rifle, Frederick grabbed it and then took cover in a ditch along side of the road. Davis was able to switch his M-16 from his right arm to his left. Before Frederick could discover Davis's location, Davis began firing, quickly walking the bullets from the dirt in front of the ditch toward Frederick. One of the rounds struck the former *FAD'H* officer squarely in the face, killing him instantly.⁷⁶ Cardott's killing brought an immediate response from the 10th Mountain Division, which had a contingent of infantry on the ground in full battle dress within hours of the event.

Although changing the SOF uniform was discussed, the chain of command resisted any move to overreact to the two incidents. The uniform remained the same. Even in hindsight, SOF officers universally supported the decision to go without helmet and body armor because of their perception of the threat and a mission statement that specified the creation of a safe and secure environment.

This "hearts and minds" approach was not without other drawbacks as well. One of the assumptions that ACOM planners had made in developing the permissive entry plan was that Special Forces would not get directly involved in law enforcement operations. The early staff plans of the Joint Operations Planning Group (JOPG) believed that assumption to be short-sighted at best. (see Chapter 2) History rested on the side of the JOPG. The USMC's previous experience in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 suggested that the imposition of American military power

⁷⁶Misc. notes of MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, USASOC History, Ft. Bragg, NC.

would require that the US assume responsibility for police functions.⁷⁷

Carter's agreement with Cedras permitted the FAD'H to remain in place for the time being. Both sides agreed with the idea that primary responsibility for law enforcement would remain in the hands of the FAD'H although it was assumed that US forces would monitor their performance and insure that human rights abuses did not happen. The plan allowed that the International Police Monitors would take over the task of monitoring the FAD'H within a few weeks, relieving Special Forces soldiers of this task.

These assumptions proved false. The International Police Monitors were slow to move into the country and slower still to create a presence in the countryside. When they did venture beyond PAP, they frequently did so only after asking for security from US Army forces. The FAD'H on the other hand, understanding that their final fate rested in the hands of Aristide, assumed a wait and see attitude. In addition, the Haitian people themselves made it clear that the FAD'H lacked any semblance of legitimacy. One question that began to arise soon after the Americans arrived was whether any police organization even loosely linked to the old regime could function. In some towns, FAD'H soldiers continued to operate but in others, all law enforcement efforts ceased. Special Forces soldiers, despite being untrained in law enforcement, assumed the role of the police. Their work entailed conducting both mounted and dismounted patrols, conducting investigations, and detaining suspects.

Patrolling activities kept soldiers busy. Difficult terrain and nearly impassable roads made it difficult to establish a presence in remote villages. HMMWVs bore the brunt of carrying soldiers to these villages, but a shortage of vehicles and the terrain itself forced some adaptations to patrol methods. In Gonaives, MAJ O'Neill rented several motocross bikes from local inhabitants and began conducting three man motorcycle patrols. In the crowded and narrow streets of Gonaives's slums, the bikes could make faster progress and be more responsive to the situation than either dismounted or HMMWV equipped patrols.

⁷⁷The USMC occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934. Shortly after the Corps arrived, the Marines declared martial law. It would be nine years before they lifted the status. In the meantime, the need to create a "secure and stable environment" brought the Marines into police operations. They attempted to create what had not existed in Haiti's past, namely an honest, non-political police force. To create a Haitian Gendarmerie required the commitment of 120 Marine officers and NCOs. See Charles M. Baily and John W. McDonald, *Historical Foundations of Peace Operations* (McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 1994).

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In the southern claw town of Jacmel, MAJ Tony Schwamm adopted a page from the United States Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual (NAVMC 2890)* and employed horse patrols to reach outlying areas. In areas accessible only by sea, Schwamm made use of his scuba team's zodiac boats to achieve the same purpose. Special Forces later used U.S. Coast Guard patrol craft to achieve a wider sweep over the coastal villages and to monitor smuggling activities in Haitian coastal waters.

For Special Forces soldiers, the law enforcement aspects associated with the US mission became the most time consuming part of the U.S. presence and the one most frequently cited as being a source of frustration. The first problem that Special Forces soldiers faced was that their role as law enforcement officers had only the most tenuous legal sanction. Because US forces had not entered the country according to the forced entry plan, they could not subject the country to martial law. Legally, the Cedras government had accepted the US presence, however, no Status of Forces Agreement existed leaving only the Rules of Engagement to govern the legal limits of US forces.

United Nations deployments fall under either Chapter Seven (peace enforcement) or Chapter Six (peace keeping). U.S. forces entered Haiti under Chapter Seven rules which permitted a more aggressive use of force. Boyatt directed his soldiers to be proactive in the use of deadly force and to push the rules to the "absolute limit." In his nightly radio address, Boyatt always reminded his soldiers that they should "hit hard, hit fast, and shoot first." Leaving nothing to chance, he made clear how this phrase was to be interpreted: "If you are out there and if you see the muzzle of a weapon move toward you or you think it is going to move toward you, or if it could move toward you, then shoot it." He made it clear that he did not want his soldiers to shoot to warn or to wound. Shoot to kill was the acceptable course of action. Special Forces soldiers did not make liberal use of deadly force. That was never Boyatt's intent. Relying on the maturity of his soldiers, the group commander's object was to grant them a marked degree of freedom to handle problems as they developed.⁷⁸

Each ODA commander essentially had free rein to determine the extent of his soldier's enforcement powers. Although the use of deadly force proved rare, problems did arise with the admissibility of statements and evidence. Frequently, Special Forces soldiers arrested people based on verbal testimony of

⁷⁸Boyatt, "3rd SFG(A) in Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY," 30.

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locals who, when asked later to make a written statement or to identify the accused in a line-up, simply refused to do so or suffered a lapse of memory. The result was that many of the Haitians Special Forces soldiers arrested were later released for insufficient evidence.

There was good reason for the fear that gripped Haitian society. Most Haitians had no faith in their legal system and even when it did function, they feared revenge from those against whom they had pressed charges. In Grand-River du Nord, a Haitian came to Americans concerning a dispute he was having with a neighbor over the boundary of his property. CPT Trent Suko, Commander of ODA-312, sent the man to the local judge for a decision on the dispute. The following morning, the man was found murdered.

Another problem associated with the role was the frustration that came with finding that most of the claims soldiers investigated proved to be false. One evening in Gonaives, for example, a local mayor from one of the hill villages fifteen kilometers west of the city walked into the police station and excitedly reported to SFC Victor Crocket, the NCO serving as the desk sergeant, that the FRAPH in his village were burning the homes of Aristide supporters and that the *FAD'H* were assisting in the terrorism. He exclaimed that several houses had already been reduced to ashes and more would follow unless the Americans responded quickly. The man also reported that those FRAPH members had secreted a weapons cache in one of the village homes.

Believing the information serious enough to warrant an investigation, four Special Forces soldiers, to include MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, the USASOC Assistant Command Historian, along with an interpreter and the Haitian mayor, climbed into a HMMWV and sped off into the darkening hills beyond Gonaives. With the mayor directing the way, the vehicle turned right onto a dirt road that grew worse with each passing kilometer. At one point, the road and a nearby stream bed became one in the same. Fischer remembered thinking that the tall hills covered with lush vegetation made an excellent setting for an ambush.⁷⁹ Finally, after nearly an hour of driving, the vehicle pulled into the village square. Although well after nightfall, villagers gathered in the street to greet the Americans, but except for the growing crowds, the village was quiet. No charred ruins could be discerned nor did the hint of smoke linger to suggest there had been any recent fires beyond those used for cooking. The small *FAD'H* garrison of four or five soldiers had retired for the

⁷⁹Misc. notes of MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, USASOC Historian, 13 October 1994.

evening and had to be awakened. No one in the crowd had any knowledge of the mayor's accusations. Nonetheless, the mayor continued to insist that FRAPH members had a weapons cache hidden in a nearby house. Posting security at the rear and side exits from the house, two Special Forces soldiers cleared the house looking for weapons. The effort turned up a confused and sleepy family but no sign of weapons.

By the time the patrol had finished its business, it was clear that the mayor's story had no validity whatsoever. The mayor had succeeded, however, in proving his ability to produce the Americans in a short time with weapons at the ready. In addition, the accusations concerning weapons caches provided an easy means to harass his political enemies. One sergeant noted on the trip back to Gonaives, "This happens all the time."⁸⁰

Increasingly, it became difficult for ODAs to stay above the political infighting going on in the countryside. The vast majority of Haitians had come to expect the Americans to side with Aristide supporters against Cedras' people. This was a role the Americans could ill afford to play given the new political dynamics of Haiti. Still, it became difficult to avoid involvement or the perception that Special Forces soldiers had taken sides. In Bocozelle, Special Forces soldiers arrested two men accused of threatening the life of the manager of a large rice farm. The dispute broke down along political lines. According to the testimony, Luthes Maius and Nicolas Mervilus, both peasants and Aristide supporters, had threatened the life of Jean-Robert Elisee, the manager of a large rice farm located in the L'Artibonite owned by Edouard Vieux. U.S. soldiers claim to have heard the threats. Maius and Mervilus, however, made counter-charges that the land in question had belonged to the state and had been farmed by the villagers before Vieux took it over by bribing government officials in 1986. Neither Maius nor Mervilus remained in custody long due to there not being an outstanding charge or sworn warrant for the men's arrests.

The problem for the Americans was that the arrests themselves created the impression in the minds of local villagers that the Americans were backing the rich at the expense of the poor, the concept of a politically neutral police force being outside of Haiti's recent experience. "Imagine our surprise, how amazing it was to us, to see U.S. troops here, in the presence of Vieux and Elisee, and being friendly to them, eating their food," Maius said. "Everyone knows how much damage those people have done here, and Elisee, especially, as head of FRAPH."

⁸⁰Ibid.

Elisee, however, denied that he had been involved in the FRAPH and counter-charged that Maius and Mervilus were squatters who were trying to seize land from farmers who had rented the land from Vieux.

Despite trying to avoid these kind of entanglements, Special Forces soldiers found themselves squarely in the middle attempting to maintain some semblance of justice in a land where local police had lost all legitimacy with the people and the judicial system had broken down completely. The total disintegration of the judicial system further complicated law enforcement efforts. Even when Special Forces soldiers had done their work well and accumulated sufficient evidence to make charges stick, it was not unusual for paperwork to be lost or for cases to be held up indefinitely because local magistrates had quit, been replaced, or simply failed to do their job. To correct this problem Aristide had to give it immediate attention after his arrival, which he did not. Indeed, despite the fact that it was apparent before the deployment of American forces that Haiti's government needed to be completely rebuilt, Aristide arrived in country with no plan to do so. The result was delay. For Special Forces soldiers walking the streets of Haitian villages, the problem did not go away after Aristide appointed Ernst Mallebranche Minister of Justice.⁸¹ At seventy-five, Mallebranche proved neither energetic nor particularly well versed in Haitian law. Aristide responded by replacing him with personal friend, Jean-Joseph Exume.

Changing the Haitian legal system was not to be easy. A shortage of trained jurists existed and many of the positions remain unfilled for months after Aristide's return. Nor was it clear that the president wanted the system to work. Before being toppled by Cedras, Aristide had used the judicial system to reward his supporters. He and his people had openly maneuvered to influence judicial decisions. In 1991, for example, when Roger Lafontant and twenty accomplices attempted to overthrow the government, Aristide pressured the judge to find the men guilty. The judge in question did so, sentencing the men to life at hard labor even though the maximum sentence permitted under Haitian law was fifteen years.⁸² Aristide defended the

⁸¹Those who support the man tend to do so by saying what he is not. As one correspondent noted, he was described as being "incorruptible" and "not stupid." Although these are certainly good qualities, they do not in and of themselves indicate that Mallebranche had the makings of a good Minister of Justice. As things turned out, he did not. Anna Husarska, "The Comedian," *The New Republic* (6 Feb. 1995), 12-13.

⁸²Michael Norton, "Can law, justice co-exist in Haiti?" *Fayetteville Observer Times*, 29 January 1995, 12A.

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interference noting that it was necessary to find Lafontant guilty for the good of the government.⁸³

Aristide's record as a proponent of "liberation theology" was part of the reason for his popularity among the Haitian people. Liberation theology, with its links to neo-Marxism, holds as its basic premise the idea that Jesus Christ came as a servant to the poor and that regardless of their humble station, the poor have a right to basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. If a government cannot provide for its people given its social and political stratification, it is the right of the poor to take what they need from the rich. The philosophy carries with it the implied idea that violence may be necessary and is justified in the reallocation of these resources.⁸⁴

Not surprisingly, it was Aristide's adherence to liberation theology and his fiery rhetoric that included references to necklacing that led to his defrocking from the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁵ In Haiti, the Roman Catholic clergy were split with some of the bishops being very fearful of what might happen should Aristide return to his old ways and incite the poor to take what they wanted from the wealthy.⁸⁶ As late as August, the Episcopal Conference of Haiti, an ecumenical council dominated by the Roman Catholic clergy, had issued a statement opposing U.S. intervention in Haiti. When the Americans arrived anyway, some clergy viewed them as Aristide's palace guard. The Catholic Church in Haiti, with some exceptions, has essentially a conservative mission. Unsure whether to expect a civil war should Aristide attempt to implement his ideas on liberation

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴ Liberation theology holds that there have been two unsuccessful approaches to dealing with poverty in the developing world. In the "Aid" approach, the poor are seen as charity cases. The "Reformist" approach, on the other hand, holds that the problem of poverty can be corrected by accelerating economic activity through the stimulus of additional capital. Liberation theology, according to its proponents, is a theology of empowerment. Although accepting much of Marxist analysis to include class conflict, the importance of economic factors, and the power of ideology to motivate, it nonetheless rejects atheism and materialism. The poor are seen as the "disfigured Son of God," and clergy are encouraged to read and understand the scriptures from the perspective of the oppressed. Liberation theology has been inherently anti-United States, blaming the ills of Latin America on the effects of western capitalism. The foundations of the theology were laid at the second bishops' conference held at Medellin, Columbia in 1968. See Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986) and Michael Novak, *Will It Liberate: Questions About Liberation Theology* (New York: Paullist Press, 1986).

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶The Catholic church has divided Haiti into one archdiocese and four dioceses. The archbishop resides in Port-Au-Prince with bishops being located in Gonaives, Les Cayes, Port-Au-Paiv, and Cap Hatian. See *Intelligence Planning Document--Haiti*, (Norfolk, VA: Atlantic Command, 1992), HA61.

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theology, or a form of neo-colonialism at the hands of the U.S., many of the clergy elected to patiently watch developments.

In a country that is 75-80 percent Roman Catholic, finding a way to reach and work with the clergy was absolutely necessary for the success of Special Forces soldiers. The solution to this problem varied by ODA and ODB. For the most part, Special Forces soldiers made a concerted effort to reach out to local clergy. In Gonaives, Bishop Emmanuel Constant gave a decidedly cold welcome to MAJ O'Neill and his soldiers. O'Neill responded by having his soldiers attend mass while he continued his efforts to meet with the bishop. O'Neill finally turned to CPT Patrick J. Ratigan, a 7th SFG(A) chaplain attached to 3rd SFG(A) for Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.

O'Neill's approach to the bishop had been polite and up front. He would request an audience and frequently was granted an appointment only to have the bishop fail to show for the meeting. Ratigan's approach was different. Instead of requesting an audience, Ratigan knocked on the parish door on 27 September and requested a meeting. The sister who answered the door said that bishop was not available. Ratigan responded by asking the time for the day's mass, knowing that the bishop could not turn him away from mass. When told that the mass would occur in forty-five minutes, Ratigan made it clear that he intended to attend. Following the mass, Ratigan introduced himself and asked the bishop if he would meet with him.

Over coffee in the bishop's study, the two men sat down and talked. Ratigan kept the conversation light noting that they, "talked about the weather and some church matters." At the end of the meeting, Ratigan asked if the bishop would agree to meet with O'Neill. Constant said that he would.

When the meeting finally occurred, the bishop quickly expressed his concerns over the American involvement in Haiti, recalling the Marine occupation early in the century. He also expressed his fears for a future under President Aristide. O'Neill made it clear that the Americans had not come to take over Haiti nor did they support any one person. He told the Bishop that the American involvement in Haiti would be temporary and was designed to re-institute democratic government. After a cordial meeting, Ratigan suggested that the bishop and he conduct a joint mass on the coming weekend. The bishop agreed.

The mass Constant and Ratigan held was centered on reconciliation and drew 1,500 people. In Gonaives, one of the nation's most strongly LAVALAS cities, only O'Neill's soldiers

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stood between the *FAD'H* garrison and townspeople bent on taking retribution.⁸⁷ Reconciliation was a theme that needed to be pushed by local leaders and Constant's decision to help change the mood of the town was a major step forward.

Ratigan repeated his success in a number of other Haitian cities prior to his return to the United States. In Les Cayes he led swaying church members in the recitation of a theme put forward earlier by the town's bishop, "Reconciliation without violence and without vacation." Only in Jeremie did he fail to pass on the message as he had wanted and here the problem was political. The area bishop had fled to the states sometime before leaving the town in hands of Father Somdi, a relative of Aristide. The priest had been an active player in LAVALAS politics and was an ardent believer in liberation theology. Only weeks before, he had given a sermon in which he compared Haiti's condition to that of Los Angeles before the riots. Sombi made clear to his listeners that the riots were a justified uprising of the poor against the out of touch rich and made it clear that similar actions were justified in Haiti. Against a priest bent on retribution rather than reconciliation, Ratigan was not able to achieve much progress.

One area in which Special Forces soldiers were able to make headway in their battle for the hearts and minds of Haitians was in the area of infrastructure repair. One of the most debilitating problems facing the creation of a viable Haitian state is the lack of a working road system. In some areas in the western reaches of the country and along the southern coast, paved roads had all but disintegrated into dirt trails. One supply convoy required eight hours to go 110 miles by HMMWV.⁸⁸ At first, repairing roads was not a major concern for Special Forces. Creating a safe and secure environment forced their efforts toward security concerns. In addition, their understanding of the OPLAN was that international agencies linked to the United Nations would take charge of infrastructure repair. It soon became clear, however, that for force protection reasons as well as to enhance pacification, Special Forces teams

⁸⁷The LAVALAS movement represents a grass roots organization which grew in support of Aristide. The name comes from an Aristide speech in which he urged his followers to become "an avalanche" for change in Haiti. Soon after, he developed the "Avalanche Plan." This plan for regaining political control over the country called for the mobilization of supporters in all sectors of Haiti. Aristide received support all across Haiti but his most active support came from in the slums of Port-Au-Prince. As part of his bid for power, he encouraged his supporters to practice intimidation tactics beyond the constraints of law. It was this approach to power that generated an energetic backlash from Haiti's wealthy elites. See Intelligence Planning Document: Haiti, HA-111.

⁸⁸Misc. notes of MAJ Joseph R. Fischer, 8 October 1994.

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would have to give some attention to road repairs. The problem, at first, was that of finding a way to pay for such projects.

In Mirebalais, a quiet town of 15,000 people located about forty miles from PAP, one Special Forces engineer sergeant came up with a novel solution to the problem of no money and no equipment. SSG Eric Benoit from ODA 376 decided that he could begin the process of making road repairs with a little creative leadership. Being somewhat of a World War II enthusiast and a reader of the literature of the period, he borrowed some of the ideas of leaders of the day, particularly those based on the concept of duty. On a daily basis, he spoke to Haitians on the responsibilities of citizens to their state and each other. He would follow the talks by asking for volunteers to go with him to repair the roads. It was not unusual for his talks to produce a regular crowd of twenty to twenty-two volunteer workers.

A reconnaissance trip through the various towns of the area turned up a number of vehicles that could be of use in fixing the roads if only repairs could be made. He eventually managed to accumulate two dump trucks, one grader, and a cement mixer. To get them working, Benoit bartered and scrounged. Eventually, with a working fleet of vehicles and a willing group of volunteers, he went to work linking the villages of his area with passable roads.

The impact on Haitian morale was immediate and positive. Benoit noted that the people could "see the progress of their work" and connected it with the arrival of the Americans who were always laboring alongside of the Haitian work crews.⁸⁹ Despite the progress however, Benoit experienced failure after failure in getting the Aristide government in Haiti to provide money for the crews. Rather than let them continue to labor without pay, Benoit would purchase fried fish with money out of his own pocket to insure the men received food for the work. Later, he resorted to using extra MREs as a form of payment.

Special Forces soldiers initially found themselves limited in their ability to secure funds to pay for improvements. ODAs were instructed that projects could not exceed twenty dollars, an amount of money barely sufficient to pay for a bag of cement.⁹⁰ Eventually, money not to exceed \$1,000 dollars per project was made available to get small scale repair projects underway. Funding for larger projects was possible with the approval of the

⁸⁹Ibid., 1 Nov. 1994.

⁹⁰O'Neill Interview, 10.

FOB. In the meantime, additional efforts were made to get NGOs and PVOs prepared for more extensive operations.

In order to assist local government in the process of getting repairs made, the idea of charging tolls for the use of roads became an issue. The problem in the past had been that tax monies flowed in one direction, from the rural regions to Port-Au-Prince, never to return. Because of this situation, tax collections ground to a halt and infrastructure collapsed at an even faster rate. In Gonaives, the local Haitian government established a toll booth on Route 100, the major north-south road from Port-Au-Prince. The toll charged to vehicles ranged between 5 and 15 gourdes (less than \$1 US currency) depending on the size of the vehicle. The money raised from the toll booth was placed in a separate account administered by city officials under the oversight of the International Organization for Migration. There had been toll booths before but the proceeds from these had been used to supplement the pay of *FAD'H* soldiers. To be certain that public knew that the money collected would go toward roads, MAJ O'Neill insured that the funds were checked and that the amount of money going in and out of the account was posted for all to see on a public bulletin board. The second part of the program of rebuilding confidence in government was to insure that road repairs began quickly.

Once it became clear that the roads were being repaired, the program began to generate its own base of support. One of the earliest proponents of the program turned out to be the truckers union, which argued that the benefits were real and tangible while the costs were cheap. As the roads improved, so too did the amount of commerce being conducted in the towns of St. Marc and Gonaives. There was, however, a downside to the improvements. Better roads meant that vehicles could travel at higher speeds, the result, of which was more traffic deaths.⁹¹

Money collected from the tolls was employed for other public works projects as well. One continuous problem plaguing Gonaives was the city's decrepit sanitation system. Garbage was regularly dumped either into the streams that flowed through the city or into the streets. At the time American soldiers first entered the city, it was not unusual to see children playing in sewage filled ditches that ran on either side of the streets. A small field alongside one of the streams served as the laundry area for the town. Women would wash their clothes in the polluted waters and then stretch the wash out in the sun to dry. The garbage that did manage to get flushed down the streams flowed into the

⁹¹Ibid., 13.

bay only to wash back up on the beaches with the rising and falling of the tides. The tropical sun produced a foul stench from the rotting garbage.

O'Neill recognized the health and quality of life issues involved in the city's sanitation problem and took steps to correct it. His men established garbage collection points throughout the city and built cement trash containers to hold the refuse. At O'Neill's insistence, toll money was used to hire street cleaners to pick up and remove the garbage that still found its way into the streets.

As for the problem of polluted beaches, O'Neill insisted that a work detail be hired to clean the beaches. The odorous garbage made it difficult to clean the beach during the daylight hours; the detail, therefore, worked at night, beginning at 2000 hours until 0800 the next morning. The ODB provided generator support to power the lights, gasoline, and wheelbarrows. Once the machinery became operational, the city provided bulldozers and dump trucks to consolidate the garbage and haul the material away. At what passed for a city dump, O'Neill's men took on the role of ecology teachers. Rather than just dig a hole and bury the material, Special Forces soldiers taught local Haitians how to compost the organic material in the hope that after six to eight months, farmers would be able to use it on their fields. Farmers would be free to take as much as they needed without cost so long as they assumed responsibility for moving the compost to their fields.

The problem of clogged city sewers could not be finessed away. Toll money was used to pay Haitians to go into the sewers with shovels and dig them out by hand. Haitians showed that they approved of the efforts being made on their behalf. When a Haitian woman attempted to dump her garbage down a sewer after the system had been painstakingly opened, a near riot occurred as her neighbors took her to task for her actions.

The ease with which local Haitians could dump garbage directly into the sewers was in part due to the economic crisis the country had been in prior to the arrival of US forces. Most of the city's manhole covers had been removed and sold by short sighted entrepreneurs for scrap metal. Local citizens identified the importance of the problem during some of the call-in radio shows that O'Neill and his officers were running. To reinforce the idea of participatory democracy, the Americans tackled the project. City administrators responded by hiring workers and securing cement. New covers were fabricated. The cement required a twenty-seven day period to adequately cure. During this period, local citizens guarded the covers to keep

automobiles from damaging them before the curing process was complete.

The city sanitation project proved to be a valuable learning tool for city administrators. As equipment broke, Special Forces soldiers would help supervise not only the repairs, but the process of buying spare parts. O'Neill credited his soldiers with teaching the Haitians how to anticipate supply problems. "Fan belts were a constant problem. It seems common sense to us," he said, "but we taught them that you do not buy one fan belt to replace the broken one, you buy lots of ten to fifteen at a time and store them in city motor pools."⁹² Over time, IOM increasingly took an interest in helping officials to learn the process of managing city operations.

Special Forces soldiers also became involved in the process of getting Haiti's schools operational. Although UNICEF provided considerable support in this area, in some instances, the individual initiative of Special Forces soldiers succeeded in bringing support that was not available through normal channels. Soldiers called home to their wives at Fort Bragg or to friends and relatives in other areas around the country to request assistance. American schools contributed supplies to the cause. One business in Philadelphia donated several thousand dollars of school supplies thanks to an Special Forces soldier's initiative and the help of friends at home.

The need to have private individuals at home get involved in the process of sponsoring Haiti's rebuilding underscored problems Special Forces teams were having in getting NGOs and PVOs involved. In some areas, Special Forces teams took on the role of facilitators, orchestrating the NGO and PVO effort. In Gonaives, LTC Dave Schorer sponsored a Sunday brunch for NGOs and PVOs that became a weekly event. Over the day's meal projects would be prioritized and then matched with resources. For many of the people working for NGOs and PVOs, working with the American military was a new experience. Many came with preconceived ideas based on perceptions dating back to the Vietnam war, perceptions that largely were negative. The Sunday brunches proved to be an excellent opportunity to begin the process of breaking down old stereotypes. From Special Forces' perspective, rebuilding Haiti's infrastructure required the immediate involvement of these organizations.

At times, Special Forces soldiers found themselves frustrated by the process. The recalcitrance of the Aristide

⁹²Ibid., 15.

government and the initial lack of action by NGOs and PVOs was disappointing. Even more disconcerting were the efforts of some Haitians to slow the process of rebuilding the country. In Gonaives, quarry workers doubled their prices. The gravel being produced was needed for road repairs but truckers refused to pay the additional costs. The result was two groups of workers refusing to work and the Americans finding themselves caught in the middle. When O'Neill arrived at the quarry, he found the truckers and quarrymen locked in a stone throwing and name calling contest that was going nowhere. The truckers were threatening to have their own people enter the quarry to cut and load the stone while the quarrymen were promising to machete anyone who was foolish enough to make the attempt. O'Neill managed to get the sides to appoint two spokesmen. Along with some translators to record the proceedings in both English and French, O'Neill and the four men got in HMMWVs and drove to a secluded spot to settle the matter.

O'Neill soon found himself conducting labor arbitration. The quarry workers explained that they dug gravel by hand. Because of a near total lack of explosives, the workers had been forced to quarry their rock by digging into the side of the mountain. Workers at the base of the mountain increasingly found themselves laboring under dangerous overhangs of rock that occasionally collapsed on them. The problem had cost the lives of eleven quarry workers over the last year. The truckers argued that however dangerous the conditions might be at the quarry, the simple fact remained that they could not pay higher prices for stone and still make enough money to operate. Without trucks to haul the stone, the road building program would soon grind to a halt.

After listening to the two sides, O'Neill came up with a solution that met with approval from the four men. The truckers would agree to pay the inflated prices until Special Forces engineers could get enough explosives together to bring down the steep walls of the quarry eliminating the dangerous overhangs. O'Neill remarked that the extra pay could be considered, "hazardous digging pay."⁹³ Once the quarry walls had been brought down, the prices would return to their normal levels. O'Neill made it clear that he did not have the explosives to do the job but assured the men that he would do his best to find them. Reassuring the truckers, he told them that if the explosives could not be found, the agreement would be renegotiated.

⁹³O'Neill Interview, 15 April 1995, 28.

Finding demolitions material in Haiti proved to be more of a problem than O'Neill anticipated. The request for demolitions went back through the JSOTF and then to the MNF. The problem was one of finding the right kind of explosives to do the job. Dynamite proved to be in short supply, so O'Neill settled for C4 which the 25th Infantry Division had available. The C4 eventually arrived along with blasting caps and detonation (det) cord. O'Neill also secured some additional engineer support. With the assistance of the truckers to haul the demolitions and the quarry men to dig the holes at the proper places, the charges were set in place. Quarrymen moved individual loads of the C4 into position while engineers set the charges.

Word concerning the time of the explosions spread quickly through the city and people gathered to watch the spectacle. O'Neill tried to limit the crowds by having the International Police Monitors (a unit from Benin) block the roads. The effort succeeded in keeping people out of the blast area. The six explosions that O'Neill's engineers detonated effectively brought down the walls of the quarry. When the walls came down, so too did the price of gravel.⁹⁴

Beginning in 1995, elements of 3rd SFG(A) began the process of rotating back to the United States. Replacement units increasingly came from other active and reserve Special Forces Groups. Mission parameters began to change as well. Police functions increasingly were passed on to the IPSF while Special Forces units were reoriented toward supporting the Haitian government in developing and implementing plans for elections scheduled for the summer.

As with other programs being implemented by the Haitian government, planning for the election sometimes appeared disjointed and excruciatingly slow to develop. In the meantime, ODAs maintained a presence through patrolling operations and took whatever steps as they could to improve the lives of Haitians in their local area. In local marketplaces, Special Forces soldiers attempted to impress vendors that the simple act of keeping food off the ground until it was sold would make an impact on public health. In St. Marc, ODA 171 helped the town rebuild its dock facilities as well as its ocean wall.

Perhaps one of the most ambitious operations undertaken by an ODA occurred on the Ile de Gonave. Located off the west coast of Haiti, the Ile de Gonave was undoubtedly the least inviting environment in an otherwise dismal land in which to work. During

⁹⁴Ibid., 31.

"Papa Doc" Duvalier's reign of power as well as that of Cedras, the Ile de Gonave had been used as a dumping ground for mentally and physically handicapped people. In a nation starved for money, the island and its people had been the lowest of priorities. Water purification and sanitation concerns were real problems for the inhabitants at the time CPT Jim Tennant and his ODA arrived on the island.⁹⁵

Tennant's first job was to conduct an assessment of the situation. After a tour of the island, the captain concluded that in a land of little water, the fifty or sixty water wells that he located with inoperable pump systems were a critical problem requiring a solution. The problem had not occurred over night. Again the embargo had taken a toll but, in addition, few Haitians living on the island possessed the skills necessary to fix the wells even when repairs could be made with existing tools and parts. In many instances, Haitians were walking seven and eight hours a day simply to get fresh water for their families. Tennant's solution to the problem was to get the parts necessary to fix the wells and then to establish "Pump University" to teach people how to fix their pumps when they broke down.⁹⁶

Tennant found the process of creating a school for pump repair to be easier than securing the necessary parts. The school he and his soldiers began eventually worked as planned. After nearly two dozen iterations of the class, the island finally had a body of skilled repairmen capable of keeping the pumps running. The process of ordering parts was somewhat more difficult. Using his operations fund to pay for the necessary materials, Tennant had his men conduct assessments of the island's wells to determine what parts would be necessary. He then submitted the requests through United Nations channels where problems quickly developed. Because the parts could not be considered a force protection issue, the United Nations viewed them as a low priority and therefore took two months to fill a request.

Special Forces soldiers also continued the process of helping Haiti's medical personnel get their facilities functioning again. In Gonaives one of the first steps was to correct the serious sanitation problems associated with the facilities. The hospital there was not unlike medical facilities in the rest of the country. When Special Forces soldiers first

⁹⁵MAJ William E. Bailey, Interviewed by Dr. Joseph R. Fischer, 13 March 1996, USASOC History and Archives, Ft Bragg, NC.

⁹⁶Ibid.

entered the building, they found sanitation conditions to be abysmal. Used hypodermic needles littered the ground, bed linens had not been changed in months and medical equipment was largely non-functional. In addition, there was a large problem with the theft of medical supplies and equipment. Picking up the needles was a slow process, one aided by the use of magnets. As for bed linens, many of sheets and mattresses were so badly soiled that they could not be cleaned. Rather than try, soldiers simply opted to burn them. New mattresses and linens were secured through NGO and PVO channels. Special Forces medics emphasized the need to keep hospital linen clean. When linen had been cleaned at all, it had been common practice of the wash women to stretch the sheets on the ground to dry. The medics stressed the need to dry them on clotheslines.

In the weeks before the election, SOF elements increasingly found themselves being called on to assist in the election process. This meant initially getting involved in the oversight of voter registration. In some areas this proved to be a sticky problem. Almost without exception, LAVALAS party members had oversight duties for registering Haiti's population. In some areas, LAVALAS registration workers made it difficult for people who were not in the party to register. In some areas, Haitians walked six and seven hours to get to their registration place only to be told that they could not register unless they had their birth certificate. Assuming the person even possessed a copy of their birth certificate, only the most ardent would-be voter would march the miles home and then return.

Had the requirement been made known in advance, the blame for the failure might justly be laid on the shoulders of a voter who failed to pay attention. In reality, the requirement that a birth certificate be produced on demand, particularly in a nation where illiteracy is high and unrecorded births common, was a Haitian version of a Jim Crow literacy test. It was a deliberate attempt to make voting difficult if not impossible for those who local LAVALAS leaders wished to exclude from the voting process. Nor was the standard applied equitably. People who registration workers knew were often permitted to register without birth certificates or other documentation. There also were rumors of threats being made against non-LAVALAS candidates, threats that varied from the physical to the spiritual. In one case, the IPSF arrested a voodoo chief and found not only that no witnesses could be found to testify against him, but that no one could be found at the jail who would book the priest. The local judge refused to be in the same building with him. In the end, there was no other recourse but to release him.⁹⁷

⁹⁷Ibid., 34.

Problems with the registration process were a fairly widespread occurrence despite the generally favorable treatment of the event by the United States media. The registration process was organized into a three tiered structure. At the top of the administrative hierarchy was the BEDS (40 nationwide). Each BED might have five or six satellite locations known as BECS (133 nationwide). Below the BECS was the BIV (approximately 6,000 nationwide). It was at this level that registration occurred. Each BEC was visited on a daily basis. The BIVS received less attention due to the density of SOF soldiers in the field. Nonetheless, it was part of the SOF mission to visit the BIVS as frequently as possible to check for irregularity in the registration process. Some of the BIVS could only be reached after several hours of walking. Their numbers and accessibility made them the place where most of the registration irregularities occurred.

When election time finally arrived on 24 June 1995, a different set of issues arose with the balloting. The ballots were supposed to provide the list of candidates for a particular office, a picture of each candidate, and the symbol of the candidate's party. A number of problems occurred because of this design. First, last minute changes in the list of candidates forced some eleventh hour reprinting of ballots. Most of this emergency work was accomplished in the United States. Second, the number of candidates frequently forced ballot pictures to be reduced in size to the point where the pictures no longer provided a distinguishable image. The lack of recognizable photographs in conjunction with Haiti's literacy problems and the fact that many people did not know the symbol for their party meant that a large number of voters were voting blind or marking their ballots as instructed by friends or campaign workers.

The process of printing ballots was so complex that most ballots were not available until three days prior to the election. Special Forces soldiers had not been assigned the task of distributing ballots, although they were expected to maintain the security of the polling places, insure that the election was free and fair, and that ballots were safeguarded until they could be moved to Port-Au-Prince for counting. It quickly became clear that the Aristide government was not going to be able to get the ballots to the polling places. Special Forces soldiers again were asked to step in and help Haiti along the road to democracy. The ballots were to be delivered by air to Special Forces elements and then transported by ground transport to the BEDS. Once they arrived at the BECs, the Haitians were to accept responsibility for distribution to the BIVS. The plan called for Haitian government officials to guard the ballots the night

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before the election at the BIVS. Many officials refused to remain overnight with the ballots fearing that Haitians opposed to the election process would either destroy the ballots or tamper with them.

Special Forces soldiers were told that regardless of their fears, Haitian election officials had responsibility for getting the ballots to the BIVS on time for the election. IPSF forces eventually were incorporated into the effort to get ballots to polling places. Still, ballots frequently arrived late and in a few cases, not at all. In some places, Haitians voted a number of times. A few reported to American soldiers that they had been paid to vote more than once. To insure they received their money, they simply registered at a number of places. To prevent Haitians from voting a second time, election officials had voters dip their thumbs in ink. This presented only a minor problem to a determined would-be second time voter. A little gasoline applied to the mark was all that was necessary to remove it.⁹⁸

There were enough irregularities in the election that Special Forces soldiers found themselves unclear on what constituted a successful election. When MAJ William E. Bailey requested some kind of guidance on what constituted a fair election, one of MG Kinzer's staff officers replied (with the general present) that "if fifty-one percent of the election is legitimate, it's a success."⁹⁹ Kinzer provided tacit approval to the staff officer's contention by adding that less than fifty percent of the American electorate historically voted so we should not be too concerned over some irregularities in Haiti's election.¹⁰⁰ The general's comparison, of course, was not valid. In the United States, no election in which forty-nine percent of the reporting polling places failed to adhere to established procedures for registration or voting would be considered valid. Kinzer was comparing participation with process. This definition of success left some SOF officers less than happy with the differences they believed existed between reality and public announcements that the election was a success. As Bailey noted, "If you can't do what is reasonable then you lower your standard until it's easily achievable and declare victory."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Ibid., 42.

⁹⁹Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 40.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 45.

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Following the elections, Special Forces continued to provide a presence in the country but the overall level of Special Forces participation was downward. Elements of the 19th and 20th SFG(A) of the Army National Guard were mobilized and sent to assist in the effort of smoothing the transition to democracy. The last Special Forces soldiers to depart Haiti did so by the first week of March, 1996.