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AFTER ACTION REPORT ON OPERATION PLUTO - MAY 4, 1961

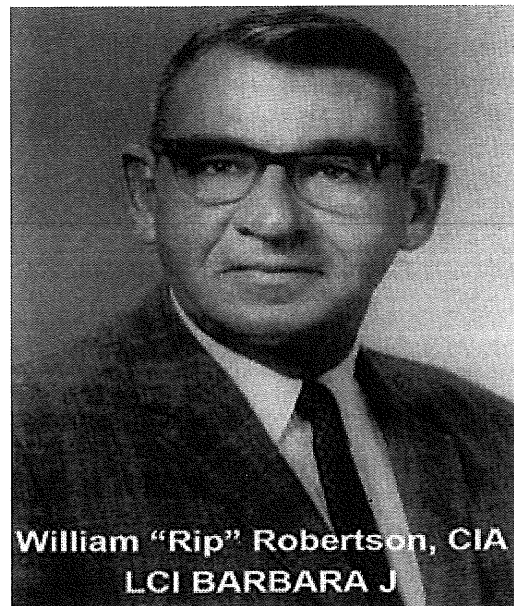
Report by Grayston Lynch of the Central Intelligence Agency "CIA", he was the american commander officer on site LCI BLAGAR when the Invasion, also he landing in Blue Beach with the Cuban's UDT, and he fire the first shot against the Cuban patrol.

His partner in the other ship the LCI BARBARA J, William "Rip" Robertson, disembark with the other Cuban's UDT in Red Beach, also sustain combat with the Cuban militia.

That report was in Washington, May 4, 1961. Lynch and Robertson prepared the report for the investigative committee chaired by General M. Taylor

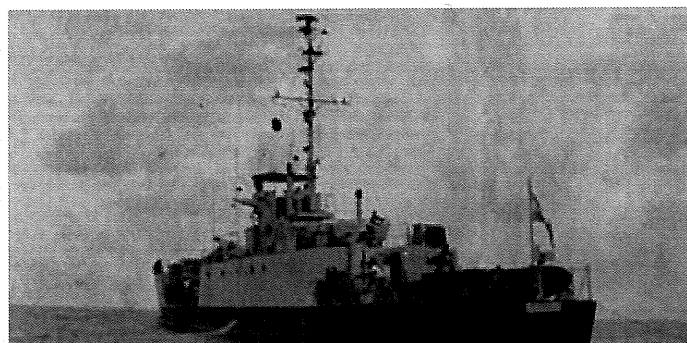
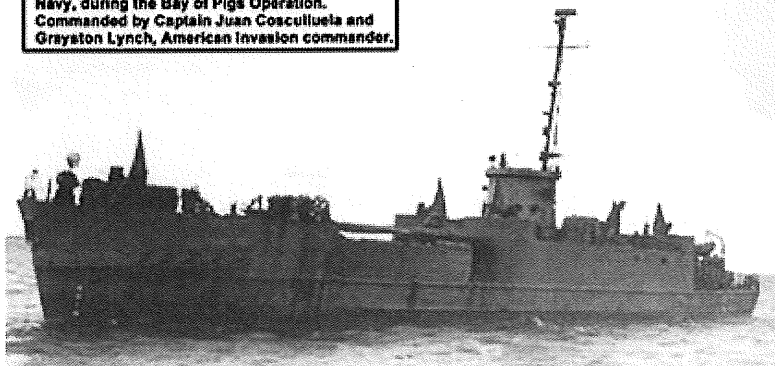


Captain Grayston L. Lynch, U.S. Army
 LCI BLAGAR



William "Rip" Robertson, CIA
 LCI BARBARA J

The BLAGAR command ship of the Brigade's Navy, during the Bay of Pigs Operation. Commanded by Captain Juan Cosculluela and Grayston Lynch, American Invasion commander.



El "BARBARA J", cuando estaba anclado en el muelle de Puerto Cabezas, observese la bandera nicaraguense en la Popa y abajo han tapado con un cartelito el nombre del mismo. Foto tomada de Julian Buznodo, Imagen del Barbara J

109. Report by Grayston Lynch of the Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, May 4, 1961.

//Source: National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 12, Cuba, Paramilitary Study. Secret; Eyes Only. Lynch prepared the report for the investigative committee chaired by General Taylor.

AFTER ACTION REPORT ON OPERATION [less than 1 line of source text not declassified]

1. Preparation:

On 28 March 1961 the LCI's *Blagar* and *Barbara J.* departed Stock Island, Key West, Florida for Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, arriving on 2 April 1961. The two case officers of the ships, Mr. William Robertson of the *Barbara J.* and Mr. Grayston Lynch of the *Blagar* and the two ships' captains [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] of the *Blagar* and [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] of the *Barbara J.*, had been told that they were to lead and direct the landing phase of the coming invasion of Cuba which would be staged from Puerto Cabezas and all the details of the operation would be given us in Puerto Cabezas. Enroute we received a cable directing us upon arrival at Puerto Cabezas to assemble and test 36 small boats that were to be used in the coming operation. After arrival in Puerto Cabezas, the crews of the two ships carried out this mission completing it on 10 April. The briefing team from Washington arrived about 11 April and briefings were conducted on 12, 13, and 14 April. These briefings and the operations and administrative plans given us were clear and thorough. The *Blagar* was given the position of command ship and the mission of landing troops on both Blue and Green Beaches. The

Barbara J. was to land troops on Red Beach and then patrol to the east to cover the landing areas.

2. Plan For Blue Beach:

The plan for Blue Beach called for landing two battalions, the 4th aboard the *Caribe* and the 6th aboard the *Rio Escondido*, beginning at approximately 0100 hours 17 April in 4 LCVP's. Three LCU's preloaded with tanks, trucks and other vehicles were aboard a Navy LSD which would rendezvous with us five miles from Blue Beach and transfer the craft to us. They were to land on Blue Beach at first light. After the landing at Blue Beach was well underway, the *Blagar* was to come alongside the *Atlantico* and take aboard the 3rd battalion and with one LCVP following proceed 16 miles east to Green Beach, put the battalion ashore and return to Blue Beach to act as Command Ship and direct the off loading of the cargo ships. Aboard each LCI was a thousand man pack of arms and ammunition plus some resupply of ammunition. This was to be on call for the brigade ashore. The landing at Green Beach was to be conducted as soon as we felt we could leave Blue Beach, but was not expected to be done until after daylight of the 17th.

The reconnaissance of the beach itself and the marking of the landing sites was to be conducted by the UDT, teams that had been especially trained for this job for the last four months. There were three of these teams: one three-man team in the *Barbara J.* for Red Beach, one five-man team for Blue Beach, and one three-man team for Green Beach were aboard the *Blagar*. They were to land as soon as the LCI's arrived in the landing areas and while the LCVP's and small boats were loading the troops. It was felt that they would have about one hour to perform their missions.

3. Plan For Red Beach:

The LCI *Barbara J.* was escort for the cargo ship *Houston* which held the 2nd and 5th battalions into the Bay of Cochinos and land them at the head of the bay on Red Beach. This was to be done utilizing the small boats (12) of the *Houston*. It was planned to load each boat with ten men and their equipment. After this landing was completed the *Barbara J.* was to escort the *Houston* back to Blue Beach where its cargo was to be off loaded by the LCU's. The *Barbara J.* was then to patrol for ten miles to the east of Green Beach.

In all this planning we were told that early morning air strikes on the air bases in Cuba were planned and that these would take out all of Castro's air force.

4. Movement To The Beach Areas:

The *Rio Escondido* had damaged her props on logs coming out of New Orleans enroute to Puerto Cabezas and could only do five knots so this ship was loaded first and left Puerto Cabezas on 12 April. All the other ships left on the night of 14 April and proceeded independently to an assembly area at point AA. The brigade commander and staff were aboard the *Blagar*. All ships arrived on station at 1730 hours 16 April and formed a column for the run into the beaches. The column was led by the *Blagar* and followed at 800 yard intervals by the *Caribe*, *Atlantico*, *Barbara J.*, *Houston* and the *Rio Escondido*. At five miles from Blue Beach the LSD rendezvoused with the column and the transfer of the landing craft began. At this point the *Barbara J.* and the *Houston* left the column and proceeded toward Red Beach. The *Blagar* moved on up to within two miles of Blue Beach to launch the UDT teams. This five-man team and Mr. Lynch departed the *Blagar* at 2345 hours 16 April in a seven-man, Navy rubber UDT boat with a 16 HP silent motor. Two men were armed with BAR's and the other four with Thompson sub-machine guns. The team was equipped with a PRC-10 radio and lighting sets for beach and buoys for marking the channels. Escorting them part of the way was a 20 foot catamaran boat from the *Blagar*. This boat also had a PRC-10 radio and mounted one .50 and one .30 caliber machine gun. This boat was

to lie off the beach and provide cover for the UDT teams.

5. Landing At Blue Beach:

The town of Playa Giron was well lighted and a cluster of very bright lights on the right of the town proved to be from the small group of buildings at the jetty which marked the right boundary of the landing area. At about 1000 yards out, six men were observed outside these buildings looking seaward. As there were no lights or noise from the ships it was assumed that they were merely coast watchers which later checking proved to be correct. The UDT team started into the beach about 300 yards west of these buildings and at when 500 yards out, all the lights in the buildings were switched off. The UDT team discovered a coral ridge about 100 yards from the beach running across the front of the landing area and one foot below the surface. They crossed this and started the boat into the beach. Fifty yards from shore a jeep came from the town down the beach road, and headed east and picked them up in its headlights. This jeep stopped directly in front of the team and turned toward the water throwing its headlights on the boat. It then caught the full fire of two BAR's and four Thompsons and was knocked out instantly. The team moved onto the beach and called the *Blagar* on the radio and told them what had happened. They also called for an immediate landing of troops on the beach before the enemy could rush in its troops. The team placed a red light by the jeep, moved toward the jetty 150 yards to the east and placed the other one; then moved out onto the jetty and placed the large white light to guide the landing craft in. While this was taking place someone pulled the master switch and blacked out Playa Giron completely. Three trucks were then observed moving toward the beach area without lights. These trucks discharged some troops who moved in on the UDT team who were in position in some old ruins on the jetty. The *Blagar* then moved in near the jetty to lend fire support to the landing. The *Blagar* was armed with eleven .50 caliber machine guns, five .30 caliber machine guns and two .75 MM RR. The militia was fired upon by the UDT team when they attempted to remove the red marker lights off the beach. This fire fight was in progress when the *Blagar* opened fire on the beach from a distance of 400 yards, clearing it completely in a few minutes. The only return fire was from one .50 caliber machine gun firing from the direction of the town. This fire wounded one man on the *Blagar* and then ceased fire. After about ten minutes of firing on the beach area, the *Blagar* moved back and the first two LCVP's came in. They struck the coral about 75 yards from the beach and tried to ride over it but could not. They then dropped their ramps and the troops waded ashore. The first troops came ashore yelling but once on the beach moved out quickly and quietly. The UDT team called the second two LCVP's to land and warned them about the coral and had them come in slower and to discharge their troops as soon as they grounded on the coral. The brigade commander and his staff landed in a boat from *Blagar* at this time and took command of the beach. His radio was not working so his messages were relayed over the radio of the UDT team. There was no opposition to this landing as the fire from the *Blagar* had driven the militia away and no firing was heard until the troops started moving through the town. Mr. Lynch then returned to the *Blagar* to direct the rest of the landing, and to prepare to go to Green Beach. The five men of the UDT team were left on the beach to find a landing site for the LCU's. They had the PRC-10 radio and the boat and motor. The landing of troops continued and by first light all the troops of the 4th battalion were ashore and the 6th battalion was starting its troops ashore using the small boats from the *Rio Escondido*. Two of the LCVP's were holed by coral and after making several trips ashore one was forced to beach itself and the other sunk but the crew was picked up and sent to the beach. The UDT team continued to search for a landing site for the LCU's with no luck until a local fisherman was found who showed them a passage through the coral that could be used at high tide about 0630. This was a narrow channel and could only be used by one LCU at a time. The channel was marked by buoys and at 0600 hours the first LCU landed. After this LCU was off loaded, it backed out and another moved into the channel. The empty one was sent to the *Rio Escondido* to complete the off loading of the 6th battalion. As this was taking place Red Beach called and reported they were under air attack by a B-26. About ten minutes later or at 0630 the first enemy aircraft appeared at Blue Beach. It was a B-26 which came from the east and strafed the LCU's landing on the beach causing some damage to the motor of one LCVP which

proceeded into the beach under its own power. There were no casualties from this attack and all anti-aircraft guns were firing on the plane. It left to the west in the direction of Red Beach. As this plane was leaving two more planes were sighted coming from the west and fire was put on them before it was discovered they were a friendly B-26 escorting a C-46 for the parachute drop. When they were recognized as friendly the fire ceased. No apparent damage was done to the planes but we were told later that one paratrooper was wounded but jumped anyway. The blue wing bands that were to identify our planes could not be seen until the planes were overhead and proved to be of little value in telling friend from foe. The enemy air attacks, although practically continuous, were never in groups of over two planes each. Each plane attacked independently and when he had fired his rockets left immediately. The only types observed were B-26's, which strafed and fired rockets, Sea Fury's which usually only fired rockets (four) and T-33 jets which fired rockets also. The B-26's and Sea Fury's were usually brought under AA fire with some effect but the T-33's always came from high out of the sun and we were never able to bring effective fire on them. After the first air attacks I called the brigade commander on the radio and advised him against moving the *Blagar* east to make the landing at Green Beach. The reasons given were that the departure of the *Blagar* would leave the ships in the beach area without their most effective anti-aircraft fire. Also by this time we had lost 3 of the 4 LCVP's and if the enemy planes hit us on our way down to Green Beach (a 2 hour trip), it might result in the loss of the battalion plus the command ship. I told him I could put the battalion ashore right away on Blue Beach by using the LCU's, and he could then start them toward Green Beach on the road. He agreed to this and two of the LCU's took this battalion ashore on Blue Beach.

At about 0700 our own B-26's were on station over the landing area and we thought the air attacks were finished but at 0800 a Sea Fury came in and dove on one of our C-46's that was returning from dropping the paratroopers. He came through our AA fire and made a firing pass on the C-46 which had dropped down next to the water and was staying within the harbor area. The Sea Fury was caught by our fire as he pulled up from his firing pass and started smoking and crashed into the water, exploded and sank. This cheered up the AA crews and other attacks later on were met with all guns that could fire. At about this time we received a message from the *Barbara J.* that the *Houston* was hit and sinking and that they would beach her. The *Barbara J.* was damaged by near misses by rockets that had split her seams and she was taking in water. She started out of the Bay of Cochinos to Blue Beach. At this time a Sea Fury came through our fire and fired four rockets at the *Rio Escondido* one of which exploded the drums of aviation gasoline on her decks. An LCU was at this time enroute to the *Rio* to take off this gasoline and her other cargo. The fire soon spread and it was apparent that the ship was lost. The crew started jumping over the sides and swimming away from the ship. All the small boats in the beach area headed for the *Rio* and soon picked up all of her crew. These boats were about 1000 yards away from her taking the crew to other ships when she blew up and sank. The depth of the water at this point is 6 fathoms. The crew of the *Rio* was put aboard the *Blagar* and the gun and boat crews of the *Rio* were sent to the beach. A message was sent to Headquarters advising them of the loss of the two ships and an answer was received directing us to take all the rest of the ships to sea and return and unload under the cover of darkness. At this time we were attacked by a B-26 and the fire from the ships and from a friendly B-26 sent him away smoking. The *Barbara J.* and the two cargo ships the *Caribe* and the *Atlantico* were told to proceed ahead of us and wait 15 miles out. At this time I called the UDT team of 5 men ashore on Blue Beach and told them to return to the ship as we were going out to sea and return that night. They replied that they would stay on the beach and light it for us when we returned that night. All these men were captured when Blue Beach fell. The *Blagar* was to escort the three LCU's which could only do six knots. Two friendly B-26's flew cover for us on the way out although the wing tank of one was loose on the front end and was hanging down. These planes stayed with us until their reserve gas supply was gone and then one of them asked permission to drop his bombs on the Cienfuegos Airport on the way home. This permission was given and he departed. Results unknown. When we reached the 15 mile point we called the other ships and told them to assemble on us but only the *Barbara J.* showed up. The two cargo ships could not be found nor would they answer the radio calls. Soon after the *Barbara J.* rejoined us we were attacked by a B-26 and

a Sea Fury coming from the beach area. The B-26 started an approach on the *Blagar* but was hit and as the plane fired its rockets it exploded in flames. The rockets struck 50 yards from the *Blagar* and the plane hit the water in the same place and bounced over the ship clearing the deck by only 20 feet. It struck the water about 100 yards over the ship and burned and sank. Parts of the plane were scattered over the deck of the *Blagar*. The Sea Fury did not press his attack but made one short strafing pass at the *Barbara J.* hitting her with two or three .20 MM shells. He then threw four rockets at the LCU's from a high altitude all of which missed and he departed. Two more attacks were made on us later in the day by lone B-26's none of which pressed the attack. The AA fire held them at a distance and they fired their rockets wide of the targets.

After dark of D-Day we continued south hoping to make some contact with the cargo ships but to no avail. Sometime during the night a message was received directing the *Barbara J.* to unload her ammunition and a 500-man pack into one of the LCU's for a run into the beach that night. It was felt that the *Blagar* should go because of the damage the *Barbara J.* had sustained; however, upon charting the course we found that due to the slow speed of the LCU, we could not arrive until after daylight of D plus 1. Headquarters was notified of this and we were told not to go. While the planning for the run into the beach was underway, some of the crew of the *Rio* that we had rescued went into the engine room and stopped the engines. They said they would not go back into the beach area without jet air cover. They were subdued and the engines were started again. Some of the Cuban crew of the *Blagar* were in sympathy with them and there were some rumors of mutiny. The day of D plus 1 was spent looking for the cargo ships which joined us late in the evening. We had orders to off load all their cargo plus the ammunition from the two LCI's into the LCU's and run it into the beach that night. We were told we must be in, unload and be off the beach by daylight. The LCU's were loaded and we started into the beach but again we notified Headquarters that we could not arrive until after first light. We were told not to go in but to stay where we were. All this time we were the only radio link with the brigade on the beach and they were sending out a steady stream of messages from the beach. Most of them were asking for air cover and air drops of ammunition. We relayed to brigade all the messages from Headquarters and from the air base. We were told that several air drops were to be made on the night of D plus 1 on the air field and the brigade was notified and marked the strip. The first air drop on the field was made but most of the chutes drifted off the strip into the woods. (These were recovered the next morning.) The brigade then requested that the drops be made on the town itself and the two later drops that night went there; one of them was right on target and the supplies landed in the streets and were quickly recovered but the last one was too close to the water and most of the chutes drifted into the sea. Some of these were recovered by small boats later on. We were also told that a C-46 escorted by two F-51's would arrive that night and land at the strip but they never appeared. One message also said that C-46's would land on the strip and discharge supplies and take off the wounded. The brigade was told to move its wounded (about 50 at this time) to the strip and they said they would. Later talks with survivors revealed that the brigade surgeon would not move the wounded to the strip for fear of losing them by air attacks. One C-46 did land at the strip at first light, discharged its cargo and departed taking one wounded man that the brigade commander had sent out with the situation report on the beach. This plane load was the last supplies ever to reach the beach. During the morning of D plus 2 the brigade kept reporting very heavy air, tank and artillery attacks from both north and east and asked continually for jet cover. These messages were sent back and we were told jet cover would be provided by unmarked jets and the brigade reported seeing them arrive over the beach area. We were not told that this was for one hour only. Later the brigade reported they were under air attack again and asked where the jet cover had gone. I could not answer this because we thought it would be continuous. The brigade also asked for close air support and sent back locations of troop concentrations and tank and artillery positions on the roads to the north. At this time the brigade was still in contact with the paratroopers to the north and was reporting them as being under heavy artillery fire and fire by tanks. The brigade reported three MIGs were over Blue Beach but it is possible they saw the unmarked jets and mistook them for MIGs. At 0500 on D plus 2 the brigade commander said that unless he got ammunition right away that he could not hold. I told him help was on

the way and we would evacuate him. His reply was that he would never evacuate and that he would fight as long as he had ammunition. At about noon on D plus 2 the *Blagar*, the *Barbara J.* and the three LCU's loaded with supplies started for the beach. Our ETA was about 1800 hours. At 1300 I was told by the Navy and relayed to the brigade that close jet air support was coming. It never appeared. At 1430 the brigade commander told me that he was out of contact with all units, out of ammunition, fighting in the water and under direct fire from tanks 500 yards away. He said he was destroying his equipment and heading for the woods. He then went off the air. At this time Headquarters was notified and the convoy reversed course as there was no need now for going in. One hour later a friendly PBY came from the direction of Blue Beach and passed us going S.W.

6. Rescue Operations:

On D plus 3 we received an order to take the UDT personnel left aboard the LCI's (3 on *Blagar* and 3 on *Barbara J.*) and transfer them to the destroyer Eaton which was escorting us. This transfer was made using rubber UDT boats in very rough seas. Mr. Lynch and Mr. Robertson also transferred with the teams to lead them on the operation. The information we had indicated that the survivors of the *Houston* were on the west side of the Bay of Cochinos and were still intact. The night of D plus 3 was spent cruising the inlets and small islands west of the Bay of Cochinos looking for the Castro patrol boat SV-3 which was reported captured by our people. No sign of this craft was found and at first light of D plus 4 we sailed into the Bay of Cochinos and up to the *Houston*. It was aground about 200 yards from shore and the decks were just above water. There was no sign of life and no trace of anyone ashore. We came out of the bay very close to the west shore and searched it with glasses but saw no one. We checked the lighthouse on the island of Cayo Piederas and found one of our 20 foot CEF boats drawn up on shore. We blew the ship's whistle repeatedly and went up and down both sides several times but found no sign of life. We then sailed to the west of the bay and started checking the keys that run off the swamps on the west side of the bay. On Cayo Blanco we spotted our first two survivors. The destroyer was about 800 yards from shore and the men ran out on the beach and started waving their shirts. We picked them up by sending the UDT team in to shore in the rubber boat using the 16 HP silent motor. We then spotted other survivors and spent all day picking up small groups in the same manner. The destroyer then put its whale boat in the water to assist. Although these boats were forbidden to actually land on the beach they could transfer the survivors from the rubber boat and take them back to the ship leaving the UDT to continue their search. One UDT team of three men were put ashore and combed the islands all day to find the ones who could not or would not come to the beach. Later in the day two Navy A.D.'s, propeller planes, were sent to us. They flew very low over the beaches and swamps and spotted several small groups. The UDT teams were then directed to these groups by radio and picked them up. The search was broken off at dark on D plus 4 and Mr. Lynch and three UDT men were transferred to the destroyer Murraby which joined us that night. On D plus 5 the search was continued by both ships. The Murraby was given the west side of the Bay of Cochinos down to the first islands and the Eaton and the Conway which also joined us that night had everything to the west. At first light on D plus 5, Mr. Lynch and three UDT men landed four miles south of the *Houston* and started to search for survivors. The coast was searched all the way to the islands but none found. We then started to comb the same keys as the day before and picked up several more small groups. Due to physical exhaustion during this period, I cannot remember exact days. I believe we spent three or four days on this operation and were at one time or the other on four destroyers, one submarine and the aircraft carrier *Essex* twice. In all we picked up 26 survivors and found and buried one man on the beach. These survivors were in very bad condition and had been without food or water for five or six days. Most of them had only underwear or parts of uniforms left and some were naked. In all only two weapons were found among them, one pistol and one carbine. During this time three Castro helicopters were seen to the north of us flying very low over the swamps and were observed shooting the survivors by submachine guns from the air. They were seen to land on two occasions. One of these was a two place helicopter and the other two large Russian types painted green with no markings. On 24 and 25 April I conducted interviews with 19 of the survivors aboard the Eaton. The

following picture of events on the beaches came from these men:

A. Action At Red Beach:

The UDT team from the *Barbara J.* led by Mr. Robertson landed at about 0130 and placed the marker light on the right side of the beach but was fired on from shore when attempting to place the left marker. This fire was from small automatic weapons and was silenced by the fire of the UDT team firing BAR's and submachine guns from the rubber boat. The first troops of the 2nd battalion started ashore in the small (19 1/2 foot) boats of the *Houston* and the UDT team marked the left of the beach with a flashlight from 100 yards out in the rubber boat. The second wave received fire from shore while on the way in. This fire was silenced by the *Barbara J.* firing over the heads of the landing force. The militia fled leaving some of their weapons behind. Once ashore the troops moved through the town and cleaned it out. The landings continued until all the 2nd battalion minus one squad was ashore and the weapons company of the 5th battalion landed also. (For more details on this period see report by Mr. Robertson on Red Beach.) One survivor, the Company Commander of the weapons company of the 2nd battalion stated that soon after daylight the beach was secured and they had captured over 40 prisoners. They discovered that 12 militia had been stationed in the town to guard a small militia radio station but that 30 or 40 had come in the day before on a picnic and were spending the night there. After the town was secured and the radio station was captured, the force which was under the command of the Brigade Deputy Commander sent a group out and captured a motor pool of trucks and gasoline at a motel and park construction project west of town. He also stated that 40 men from this small village offered to join them and fight against Castro. These men were put to work driving the captured trucks and other labor jobs on the beach. They were in complete control of the town and were not hurt by the air attacks which were directed against the town itself. These attacks and later ones caused many civilian casualties. The first attack by the militia came at 1000 on D-day and was from the north. This force was estimated at between 500 and 600 militia and had some tanks but friendly airplanes knocked out the tanks before they could go into action. This attack was beaten off with very heavy casualties suffered by the militia. As they were running short of ammunition a call for help was sent to Blue Beach and one tank and two 2 1/2 ton trucks of ammunition was sent to them along the beach road. This arrived at 1400 just as the next big attack was about to hit them and the tank went into action as soon as it arrived. This attack was launched down the road from the north. The troops, all militia, were in open, 2 1/2 ton trucks and open, semi-trailer trucks. The fire of the tank and the 57 MM R.R.'s, 3.5's and the 50 caliber machine guns of the landing force hit them before they could get out of the trucks. This force was estimated at 1500 and all the survivors of this action claimed they killed or wounded over half of them and destroyed most of the trucks. The next attack came late in the evening and continued all night. During the night action at least five enemy tanks were knocked out, two Russian ones and three American Sherman tanks. These were destroyed by 57 MM R.R. and 3.5's. How many were knocked out by the tank is unknown. The militia at one time sent an ambulance under a white flag to pick up wounded but tried to sneak two trucks loaded with militia in behind it. The tank destroyed all three vehicles with one round and the machine guns finished the job. At another time some militia that were trapped in some buildings came out to surrender but when the CEF troops moved toward them they dropped to the ground and opened fire. All this group was then wiped out by the CEF troops. The survivors stated that all the troops opposing them were militia and all prisoners had the Communist party card on their persons. When asked about these cards they stated that if they had no cards they could not get work. Most of the militia stated also that they were willing to fight against Castro. At about 0730 on D plus 1 the force at Red Beach was low on ammunition and was withdrawn to Blue Beach in the captured trucks, their own trucks and the tank. They took their wounded with them but released all their prisoners upon departure. They destroyed the radio station and all the trucks that they could not use. Upon arrival at Blue Beach they held a muster to account for everyone. Blue Beach at this time on D plus 1 was quiet and the survivors stated that they had lunch and slept, cleaned up and were issued ammunition. That afternoon they went into action at Blue Beach, fought all night and at about 1100 the next morning 90 men of the 2nd battalion under the command of the Deputy Brigade Commander (Oliva)

were sent back to Red Beach to stop a large column of militia, tanks and artillery that was mass-ing there. This force it is believed never reached Red Beach but it is known that they went into action because they called for mortar fire and the 2nd battalion mortars fired 120 rounds for them and then was out of ammunition. Two tanks went out with this group and were seen coming back to Blue Beach about 1300 damaged and out of ammunition. Nothing more was heard of this group and soon after the enemy force came down the road from Red Beach and attacked it from the west. This force was very large and had heavy artillery (larger than 4.2) and tanks. One survivor stated that at 1400 he went to Brigade Headquarters which was by the beach for ammunition and the Brigade Commander and staff were there but when he made a second trip at 1530 the Brigade Headquarters was gone and also a sailboat that was tied up near it. He states that starting at 1600 the front lines collapsed due to the lack of ammunition and at about 1700 all resistance ceased. He left Blue Beach with four companions in a row boat and saw many other small boats leaving at the same time. The enemy planes strafed these boats and caused many casualties. His boat drifted all night and at dawn they found themselves on the beach on the west side of the Bay of Cochinos. They then made their way down the keys to the point where they were rescued by the UDT teams. One survivor stated that his company was hit in Blue Beach on the night of D plus 1 by a shell fired from a tank that emitted some smoke and threw droplets on their clothing. The droplets did not burn, but the smoke did and caused choking and pain. They ran out of the area and when they returned later they found several dead from this shell, but he claims there were no wounds and the men died from what he thinks was a gas shell. He also stated that the next morning several men told him of the same thing occurring in their sectors, also by tank fire. Detailed action on Blue Beach is unknown due to lack of any survivors who landed there in the original force.

B. Sinking of *Houston*:

The *Houston* was hit sometime after first light by rockets while still at Red Beach. These rockets started fires in the number one and number three holds and the *Houston* pulled out from the beach. The fires were put out by the crew and the ship turned and started back in. At this time she was hit the second time by two rockets fired from a T-33 jet. These struck the stern somewhere around the screws knocking out the steering. The ship was crosswise in the bay and could only go forward or backward. She attempted to back up but started sinking by the stern so the Captain ran her up on the beach on the west side of the bay. This was about five miles south of Red Beach. The planes came back again so the order was given to abandon ship. Aboard at this time was one squad of the 2nd Battalion and most of the 5th Battalion plus a 20-man ship's crew, approximately 220 men. Six men were killed by the air attack and seven more drowned swimming to shore. Small boats were used plus lines to the shore to get the men off. After everyone was ashore the C.O. of the 5th Battalion took command and organized a perimeter. He then sent men back aboard to try to salvage what arms and equipment they could. Some was gotten off but as the holds were filled with water, this was not easy. He then sent scouts out in the direction of Red Beach, but they returned and told of running into militia between them and Red Beach. This beach perimeter was held until D plus 2. Some food and water was gotten off the *Houston* but not nearly enough. On D plus 2 a patrol craft about 35 feet long and mounting one machine gun came from the east and pulled up to the *Houston*. It is believed that this was the Castro craft SV-3. The boat checked the *Houston* and then came in to the beach to check the three small boats drawn up on shore. When it reached the beach, the troops ashore fired on it and killed four of its six-man crew. Two were captured. The Captain of the *Houston* then took this craft together with the C.O. of the 5th Battalion, the padre, two or three of the doctors and five other officers of the 5th Battalion out to the *Houston* and put aboard all the gasoline and supplies they could find. The Battalion C.O. then gave the order for the beachhead to break up in small groups and try to get out to the south. Some groups went to the north, some went inland but most started down the coast to the south. The Battalion C.O. then left to the south in the captured boat and said he was headed for Grand Cayman. Out of the groups who started south down the beach 21 were later rescued, including some of the crew of the *Houston*.

110. After Action Report

Washington, May 4, 1961.

//Source: National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 12, Cuba, Paramilitary Study. Secret; Eyes Only. Robertson prepared the report for the Taylor Committee.

MR. ROBERTSON'S REPORT OF ACTIVITIES ON *BARBARA J*

The writer was Operations Officer on the *Barbara J*. The *Barbara J* is an LCI fitted with eight .50 cal machine guns, three .30 machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle, and a 57mm recoilless rifle, plus various automatic hand carried weapons. The job for the *Barbara J* during the operation was as follows:

1. The *Barbara J* was to escort the transport ship *Houston* into Bahia Cochinos to Red Beach. The *Houston* had aboard the 2nd and 5th Battalions Reinforced.
2. The *Barbara J* was to spot the *Houston* offshore, while the *Barbara J*'s beach reconnaissance team reconnoitered the beach and set light markers at each flank of a suitable landing site.
3. The *Barbara J* was to provide gunfire support when necessary and assist in the unloading of the *Houston*'s men and supplies at Red Beach.
4. When the beach was considered in good shape, the *Barbara J* was to escort the *Houston* out of Bahia Cochinos and proceed to patrol the beach from Green Beach eastward for five miles, engaging any enemy sea or road convoys heading toward Green Beach.
5. The *Barbara J* was to engage in any harassment operations which would confuse the enemy and help our own forces.

The objective of the 2nd Battalion on Red Beach was to secure the beachhead, proceed northward to Sopillar airstrip, link up with the paratroopers, and proceed to Objective A on the railroad at 82.0-72.0 on the 1:50,000 map. The objective of the 5th Battalion was to land behind the 2nd Battalion and take over and safeguard the beachhead.

At 2330 on D-1 the *Barbara J* and the *Houston* separated from the major convoy on schedule. At 0115 on D-Day the *Barbara J* and the *Houston* were on station opposite Red Beach. One *Barbara J* small boat with radio was dispatched to stand by with the *Houston*. The other small boat with the reconnaissance team and the writer proceeded ashore to the right of Red Beach and scouted and marked the right flank without being detected. Then the team proceeded by water to the point which was to be the left flank of Red Beach and discovered the point was occupied by enemy men. The 2nd Battalion commander was asked to notify us when he was within ten minutes of dispatching his first wave to the Beach. When the Battalion commander signified he was ready, the recon team approached the point. At about 30 yards off the point four or five machine guns and submachine guns opened fire on the recon boat. The recon boat returned fire and silenced these guns. The recon boat backed up to approximately 100 yards off the point and marked the left flank with a blinking flashlight towards sea. The first forty soldiers landed without opposition, though sporadic fire started as soon as they had landed ashore. This fire was their initial contact with the 50 militiamen in the village at the time of the landing.

Within twenty minutes of the reconnaissance team's initial contact with the enemy, six or seven trucks were seen entering the area from the left flank. The writer called for supporting fire from the *Barbara J*. The *Barbara J*'s first shots hit the lead truck and threw the convoy into darkness and confusion and

apparently helped delay the convoy's arrival at Red Beach until later in the morning.

The reconnaissance group proceeded then to help in landing the troops. These troops were landed with approximately two units of fire and a minimum of equipment other than their personal weapons and the unit weapons. The unit weapons we succeeded in getting ashore were four .30 cal light machine guns, four 81mm mortars, and four 57mm recoilless rifles, plus 3.5 rocket launchers. On the second trip to Red Beach, our boat was hit by machine gun fire coming from about 200 yards left of the Red Beach left flank. One man in the boat was killed. On arrival at the beach this second trip, the writer sent for a representative of the 2nd Battalion command post, and between the two, an airstrike plan was set up in the event that communication might be out when the daylight airstrike arrived. In the plan, the aircraft would take on any targets moving along the beach towards Red Beach or along the road from the north towards Red Beach, and at first daylight the 2nd Battalion commander would send a well-briefed officer to the beach carrying a red flag for further conference with the writer. The commanding officer at this conference requested that future landing craft be landed nearer the right flank of the beach in as much as all enemy activity to date was being encountered from the left. There were explosions within the beachhead at this time which the writer took to be incoming mortar fire with some light calibre.

During this period, some .50 cal machinegun fire was directed at the *Barbara J*. The *Barbara J* was lying about 500 yards offshore and the *Barbara J* engaged this machine gun and silenced it.

The *Houston* reported that there were no small boats, so our recon team tied onto one of the *Barbara J*'s rubber boats to the lee side of the *Houston* where we found seven or eight small aluminum boats huddled with no troop movement going on. The writer climbed aboard and got a boat-load and a half of soldiers off-loaded before being stopped by a Cuban believed to be the 5th Battalion Commander. The writer believes that this man's intention was to wait until first daylight before continuing off-loading the 5th Battalion. At this point, 270 soldiers had been off-loaded. This was the 2nd Battalion Reinforced and the weapons company from the 5th Battalion and the Assistant Brigade Commander.

On the trip into shore, first daylight had arrived and at approximately 6 o'clock a B-26 appeared low and machine-gunned our small boat without success on this first run. When he came again we turned our small weapons and the weapons of all the soldiers in the small boat and fired back at him. On this pass the B-26 wounded one soldier with a freak shot that passed through another man's weapon before hitting the soldier. On the third pass of the B-26, he immediately, after passing overhead, started smoking and wobbling and soon went down over land with one survivor parachuting out.

A second B-26 appeared and started after the *Barbara J* and *Houston*. He strafed and dropped two large bombs, both misses. The *Barbara J*'s skipper was circling the *Houston* tightly and bringing all her firepower in support of the *Houston* during this action.

At this point, our cargo planes bearing paratroopers and accompanied by two friendly B-26's arrived in the area and the enemy aircraft departed. At the departure of our aircraft, we were attacked by a fighter plane which I believe was a Sea Fury. The skipper of the *Barbara J* decided to disperse until our air cover had better control and so moved the *Barbara J* and the *Houston* away from Red Beach about five miles.

The writer suggests that the following is a likely account of the short history of Red Beach. The account is compiled from observation and interrogation of survivors. Very little action occurred at Red Beach before daylight. Most of the shooting was our own. The air attack at daybreak, which included bombing and strafing the beachhead, damaged nothing important. At approximately 1000 a truck-mounted attack from the north involving 500 or 600 militia was broken up by Red Beach forces. This was accomplished with small losses to our forces and considerable loss to the militia. Fifty to seventy of the militia were

captured, most of which were willing to join the Red Beach forces. The paratroopers were apparently engaged immediately upon landing, and link between the paratroopers and Red Beach forces was not accomplished. At 1400 on D-Day, another attack was made from the north involving 1,500 militia. An unknown amount were destroyed en route to this battle by a friendly B-26. Two of our own tanks which had been sent up from Blue Beach assisted in stopping this attack. From all accounts, this force was well handled by our forces, and we claimed 1,000 casualties were inflicted. Seven tanks, which arrived after midnight were engaged by our 57mm recoilless rifles and 3.5 rockets, and five were destroyed. On D+1 an orderly withdrawal to Blue Beach was effected, since Red Beach was out of ammunition. Red Beach losses at this time were 25 dead, and an unknown amount wounded. The wounded were carried to Blue Beach.

On arrival at Blue Beach, the 2nd Battalion was put into the Blue Beach defense line which had been comparatively quiet till this point. In the afternoon, a battle started which put 1,500 militiamen against the 2nd Battalion. This battle lasted all night. The following morning an attempt was made to regain Red Beach, but the 2nd Battalion encountered tanks, trucks, troops, and artillery, and it is believed, did not reach Red Beach. The heavy mortars supported the 2nd Battalion until out of ammunition. Two tanks which were supporting the 2nd Battalion were returned to Blue Beach damaged by this action. It is believed that the 2nd Battalion was lost with Blue Beach.

At the time when the skipper of the *Barbara J* ordered the dispersal of the convoy, a B-26 arrived requesting targets for his bombs at Red Beach. He was instructed to go to Objective A on the north road and engage any mobile forces moving towards Red Beach. He located a convoy moving into Red Beach with blue marked trucks and was refrained from interfering with this convoy since it was known to be ours.

At this point the skipper of the *Barbara J* turned the convoy back towards Red Beach. The *Barbara J* and the *Houston* arrived off the point Carazones. When a T-33 jet arrived and strafed and fired rockets, with near misses for the *Barbara J* and hits on the *Houston*, a welded seam on the *Barbara J* was split, causing the *Barbara J* to take water at the rate of four feet each two and a half hours. The *Houston* announced the loss of their steering capability, and was at this time headed towards the beach. The skipper of the *Barbara J* ordered the *Houston* to reverse engines and back away from the beach. The *Houston* attempted to do this, but was observed to begin sinking rapidly by the stern. At the same time another Sea Fury started attacking the *Houston*. Gasoline was covering the water all around both ships, and the *Houston* reversed its engines again and made straight into the shore, grounding about 100 yards off-shore. As she struck shore, men were seen diving over the side in life jackets. The Sea Fury continued its strafing runs against the ship and the men in the water. From subsequent reports, we believe from seven to twenty men were killed in the strafing, and ten drowned from inability to swim. The *Barbara J* had no small boats; the *Houston* didn't attempt to use its three small boats. There was speculation as to whether we should attempt an evacuation, but this was tempered by the idea that the occupants of the *Houston* were scheduled to go ashore with the possibility that they could make a tie-up at Red Beach. The *Barbara J* was ordered to move to the Blue Beach to provide protection for the unloading operations there, the ships at Blue Beach being under air attack also.

From interrogation of survivors, it is learned that the *Houston* group proceeded towards Red Beach, but the scouts observed militiamen, and the entire group withdrew to the swamp. My last radio contact with this group was an announcement by the 5th Battalion Commander that he had successfully regrouped 1-1/2 miles west of the sunken ship. Information on his position was requested for an intended air supply drop. Within a half hour he was under attack. His request was for small boats so that he could strip the *Houston* of necessary supplies. Arrangements were made for RB-12 rubber boats and paddles to be dropped at first darkness. Within a half hour after this arrangement, the *Houston* was under attack and apparently the enemy was trying to split it up. I feel that our voice communication was being monitored.

The following night an enemy patrol craft approached the *Houston* and landed five militiamen. These five were attacked by the survivors of the *Houston*. Two militiamen were killed and three taken prisoners. The three prisoners were executed because of the logistical problems they made for the survivors. On the 19th the skipper of the *Houston*, the 5th Battalion Commander, five 5th Battalion officers, the Chaplain, and three doctors left the beach in the captured patrol craft, bidding their men to scatter and make out for themselves. This might indicate a reason why the 5th Battalion seemed reluctant to go ashore at Red Beach. Of the remaining men, a few immediately made their way north through the swamps, and a few made their way south. Those that were rescued on the southern islands had swum most of the way in the swamps. The *Houston* skipper and the small boat reportedly departed for Cayo Guano, but radio Cuba reported it landed at Cayo Largo and the men were captured.

As the *Barbara J* departed from Bahia Cochinos, a Sea Fury was circling, but apparently was bluffed by two of our B-26's which were flying protection for *Barbara J*. A jet T-33 was seen to attack one of the B-26's, and the B-26 was seen to fly lower and to either crash or make a crash landing on the airstrip at Blue Beach area. The remaining B-26 hovered over the *Barbara J*, reported he was out of ammunition, and asked for instructions. I requested that he stay as long as possible to bluff enemy aircraft, which he did, until he had only fifteen minutes reserve gasoline supply. This man's name was Ferrari and should be commended for courageous work.

At the entrance of Bahia Cochinos we had observed the *Rio Escondido* catch fire and blow up.

On arrival in the Blue Beach area, all ships were ordered south. We departed with the *Atlantico* and *Caribe* leading, and the *Barbara J* providing close support. The U-boats protected by the *Blagar* followed. The *Blagar* requested all ships to merge for mutual self-protection. The *Barbara J* joined the *Blagar* and U-boats, and the *Caribe* and *Atlantico* disappeared over the horizon. One strafing and bombing pass was made on the right flank LCU, with the *Blagar* and *Barbara J* giving her support. What appeared to be a salvo boat of shore-based artillery splashed five shells within the convoy on the way out. This was possibly 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock in the afternoon of D-Day.

At approximately 3:30, when the convoy was outside the continental limit, a Sea Fury and a B-26 attacked. The Sea Fury circled high and the B-26 came for a low strafing attack, lining up the *Barbara J* and the *Blagar*. As the B-26 passed over the *Blagar*, it exploded in a great ball of flame. It is believed that hits from *Blagar* guns had entered the gas tanks, and that the pilot fired his rockets, causing the explosion. The Sea Fury then circled for a few minutes and started a run on the *Barbara J*, but peeled off early, probably because of the *Barbara J*'s gunfire. He scored 20mm hits on the *Barbara J*. At this time we were ordered further out to sea.

Preparations were made for a night run into Blue Beach. When the order arrived, headquarters was notified that we were without the cargo ships, and that it was felt that it was impossible to arrive at Blue Beach before daylight. Air and/or sea support was requested, with the warning that we felt we were sure to be sunk without this protection and thus be no good to Blue Beach. During the night we were ordered to cancel this run. The following evening the cargo ships had been reassembled, and the *Caribe* was unloaded into LCUs. The *Barbara J* was unloaded into an LCU when the order came for the *Barbara J* to make a 500-man pack supply run to Blue Beach. The *Barbara J* was leaking and one bank of engines was out and emptied of supplies and had no small boats, so the responsibility was shifted to the *Blagar*. The writer transferred to the *Blagar* to assist in this run and to assist the *Blagar* Operations Officer with communications functions. At approximately midnight the run was started, with an additional warning to headquarters that we were going to arrive in daylight. An air or sea support was necessary. Sometime during the night this trip was cancelled.

The writer relieved the Operations Officer of the *Blagar* of communication duties at times during the

night. The gist of the communication can be summed up as follows: The Brigade Commander continually reported he was out of anti-tank ammunition and surgical supplies and had wounded to evacuate. All messages were forwarded to strike base and U.S. Navy. From strike base and U.S. Navy we continually received assurances that re-supplies and evacuation of wounded were being carried on and that a close air support strike was arranged for first light. A tank column had been located coming into Blue Beach from the north. Its exact location was reported by the Brigade Commander. Arrangements were made for strike base to take on these tanks at first light, and U.S. Navy jets were "on the way." The jets had not appeared when first light arrived and their whereabouts was requested. We were told that they were still "on the way."

At 20 minutes daylight a request from headquarters came that either of the two operations officers go on beach to evaluate the situation. A Cuban CW operator was recruited to go with the writer. No boat operator was found who would go. Subsequent activity negated this operation.

At daylight the beach was under air, tank, and artillery attack. During the night, two re-supply drops had been made, part of which went into the ocean, part of which was received. A C-46 had landed on the airstrip, dumped its supplies, and departed evacuating one wounded. The Brigade Commander began talking in terms of his men standing in the water fighting, and "being massacred" and "murdered." At one point he could see four Navy jets high overhead, and was being attacked simultaneously by three enemy Sea Fury's. When he asked that the jets enter the fight and was told that we were doing everything to get permission, his comment was "God damn it, God damn you, God damn you. Do not wait for permission." He continually spotted tanks, artillery locations, and continually asked when would they be attacked by our airplanes. About midday the base announced that we were going in in full force, shooting, for evacuation purposes. The Brigade Commander was told that within three hours the Navy forces, air and sea, plus our cargo convoy would be there to pick them up. He announced that an enemy tank was within 400 yards of his command post firing at him and he had no ammunition with which to fight it. He said he would not be there in three hours. In his next message he said he was destroying his communications set and going into the woods. We were trying to get him to hold on when communication abruptly broke. We have two reports: (1) That the Brigade Commander was seen going to sea in a small sailboat, and (2) That he had gone inland to Excambrey. The convoy started out to sea.

On the morning of D+3 the operations officers of the *Blagar* and the *Barbara J* were transferred by rubber boat, along with six UDT men and personal weapons and radios, aboard the USS *Eaton*. Subsequently we boarded the aircraft carrier *Essex* along with the commander of the destroyer group, Captain Crutchfield, for the purpose of conferring with Admiral Clark and Marine Colonel Mallard about effecting rescue operations. It was generally thought among all concerned that the *Houston* survivors could be sought only if the information concerning them was recent, accurate, and reliable. The *Eaton* was dispatched towards Bahia Cochinos with our operations officers and UDT men aboard with the understanding that Mallard and Clark would seek information on the validity and accuracy of intelligence concerning survivors on the beach, and would send authorization or cancellation of that operation prior to the arrival of the *Eaton* on station. The operation was cancelled by Admiral Clark and we spent the night sailing close to the beach for light signals. At daylight movement was seen on Cayo Blanco del Sur. A rubber boat was dispatched and contact made with four survivors, who were pulled aboard. A whaleboat was dispatched from the *Eaton* with U-boat personnel aboard. The whaleboat would carry the writer and three UDT men to a position 200 to 300 yards off the beach, from where we would make the approach and contact with the survivors by rubber boat. Seventeen survivors were removed in five separate operations by this group over a period of two days. Predawn landings and reconnaissance were made each day to assure that Castro's militiamen hadn't occupied the island during the night. Similar activity was conducted by the *Blagar* operations officer and three UDT men on other beaches. The final day these two groups swept Cayao Miguel and Cayao Blanco del Sur and the island of Carrario. We carried loud speakers and searched in the mangrove swamps and tried to reassure hidden refugees that

the arms we carried were not against them, but against Castro. They were afraid of our arms. For example, one man had been lying with only his face out of the water, and when he saw the writer, he tried to sink under water. We tried to assure him, but he thought that the writer was a Russian. He said that there were no friends any more, and we were Russians. We broadcast that if they would call to us, we would approach them without clothing and arms. During this operation Castro had helicopters calling as if they were saviors of the refugees and then submachine gun those who would show themselves. I believe that we missed many survivors because of the smallness of our patrol. We could not cover every square foot of these islands, and the refugees were afraid to expose themselves to us. All were in weakened condition and at times had to be carried to the boat.

On this night, the militiamen moved onto the islands and set fire to the brush and claimed to have driven out 166 survivors. I believe that this is an exaggeration. On the following morning, the writer and four UDT men and rubber boats and equipment boarded the submarine USS Threadfin and started towards Bahia Cochinos for an attempted rescue near the sunken *Houston*. This operation was cancelled at 7 o'clock in the evening and the Threadfin returned to sea because of an occurrence which is U.S. Navy Top Secret and not to be recorded in this report. The writer and men returned to the Eaton. The writer and the operations officer of the *Blagar* were air-lifted to the *Essex* and subsequently to Guantanamo and to headquarters.

/2/Early Warning.

3. This is a warning order./3/

/3/According to the memorandum for the record prepared by Commander Mitchell, which outlined the evolution of the rules of engagement for Operation Bumpy Road, at 5:30 a.m. on April 17, Bissell called the Operations Center at the JCS and stated that the White House had only approved the employment of an Early Warning vessel. (National Defense University, Taylor Papers, Box 12, Cuba Paramilitary Study) Accordingly, General Gray sent a message to Admirals Dennison and Clark countermanding the authorization to provide an air CAP for CEF shipping. In JCS telegram 994222, sent at 5:50 a.m., Gray, on behalf of the JCS, instructed Dennison and Clark to execute only the mission set forth in paragraph 2b of JCS telegram 994221, subject to the limitation that EW vessels were not to approach any closer than 30 miles from the Cuban coastline. Gray stipulated that an air CAP was not authorized. (Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba, Subjects, Taylor Report)

112. Editorial Note

The landings of the Cuban Expeditionary Force on the southern coast of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs began as scheduled at 1 a.m. on April 17, 1961. At 1:44 the *San Marcos* completed the discharge of LCUs and withdrew to sea. (Chronology maintained in the Office of Chief of Naval Operations; Naval Historical Center, Area Files, Bumpy Road Materials) Air support for the landings was limited to two CEF B-26 bombers, but Admiral Clark reported that the two destroyers he had assigned as Early Warning vessels would be on station some 30 miles offshore by 3:30 a.m. (CTG 81.8 telegram 171418Z, April 17; *ibid.*) Paratroopers of the First Battalion were dropped at 7:30 and seized the road center of San Blas, 10 miles northeast of Blue Beach. They were reinforced soon thereafter by the Third Battalion and a heavy weapons detachment. (Memorandum No. 1 from the Cuban Study Group to the President, June 13; Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba, Subjects, Taylor Report)

At 9:40 a.m. units of Admiral Clark's Task Group reported that the CEF ships supporting the invasion were under heavy air attack and were putting out to sea. (CINCLANT telegram 171608Z to JCS, April 17; Naval Historical Center, Area Files, Bumpy Road Materials) By 10:17, the CIA reported to the JCS that the *Rio Escondido* and the *Houston* had been sunk, and the *Blagar* was under attack. (Chronology maintained in the Office of CNO; *ibid.*) Admiral Clark instructed the two destroyers providing early warning to withdraw if necessary, but not to become involved in action except for self defense. The Task Group would provide air CAP for the destroyers but not the CEF. (CINCLANT telegram 171608Z to JCS; *ibid.*) At 10:36 a.m. Admiral Dennison instructed Task Group 81.8, which had been retiring from the area according to plan, to reverse course and move north to a position which would allow closer support if authorized. (CINCLANTFLT telegram 171536Z to CTG 81.8, April 17; *ibid.*)

113. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) and Secretary of State Rusk

April 17, 1961, 9:11 a.m.

//Source: Department of State, Rusk Files: Lot 72 D 192, Telephone Conversations, 3/31/61-5/31/61. No classification marking. Transcribed in Rusk's office by Phyllis D. Bernau. Bundy was at USUN; Rusk was in Washington.

TELEPHONE CALL FROM MR BUNDY IN NEW YORK

B said he administered the first shock--there is a morale problem there and glad he came for this reason. For various reasons he/1/ got himself in a state of mind this was not going to happen--partly because of a general conversation with our chief and partly because of a breakdown of communications. B conveyed general apologies for what happened over the week end. He will pick up the pieces to see where he can go. He/2/ patched up a picture of Uncle Sam and now is going to be in the middle of its destruction and not easy. B said maybe the Sec and the chief will want to talk this a.m. but meantime wait a bit. The Sec said not too much is coming in from there--can't tell too much about what is happening. B asked if there is anything he should do. The Sec said he is being called back at 9:30 and there may be something.

/1/An apparent reference to Stevenson.

/2/Another apparent reference to Stevenson.

The Sec said there should be a message up there re Adlai's speech/3/--something had come in here.

B asked to be called if anything came up./4/

/3/Cuban Foreign Minister Roa repeated and elaborated on charges of U.S. aggression against Cuba in debate in the First Committee on April 17. He charged that Cuba had been invaded by mercenary bands organized, armed, and financed by the Central Intelligence Agency. He stated that the mercenaries came from bases in Florida and Guatemala, and he listed addresses of recruiting centers in the United States. (U.N. doc. A/C.1/SR.1150) Stevenson followed and categorically denied Roa's charges. The United States, he stated, "has committed no aggression against Cuba, and no offensive has been launched from Florida or from any other part of the United States." (Ibid.)

/4/Bundy and Rusk talked again at 10:13 a.m. Bundy said that Stevenson had talked to the President, and "took a strong view." (Department of State, Rusk Files: Lot 72 D 192, Telephone Conversations, 3/31/61-5/31/61) At 10:15 a.m. General Cabell called Rusk to report that two of the CEF ships had been sunk in heavy air attacks. (Ibid.)

114. Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy

Washington, April 17, 1961.

//Source: Kennedy Library, Papers of Arthur Schlesinger, Cuba 1961, Box 31. Secret.

SUBJECT

Cuba: Can We Recognize a Provisional Government?

I raised last week with the State Department the question of the conditions under which we could take formal diplomatic cognizance of an anti-Castro regime in Cuba. I have now received a memorandum from the Legal Adviser dealing with this question./1/

/1/This memorandum, entitled "Various Considerations If an Insurrectionary Movement Gains Control of a Specific Area in Cuba," is dated April 7, and was forwarded to Schlesinger on April 17 under a covering memorandum from Executive Secretary Lucius D. Battle. (Ibid.)

1. The memorandum makes clear that the United States can not, under international law, recognize an insurrectionary group which has control of only a relatively small area in Cuba. The tests for recognition include possession of the machinery of state, administering the government with the assent of the people

and without substantial resistance, and capacity to discharge international obligations. Obviously the Revolutionary Council will not meet these tests until it is established in Habana and until fighting has substantially ceased. Recognition of the insurgents at an earlier stage would probably constitute a casus belli.

2. The memorandum also makes it clear that, if the insurgents gain control over a particular area and if they organize a framework of government within that area, a case can be made for US recognition of a state of belligerency in Cuba.

If the US recognized a state of belligerency, we would have the position, under international law, of a neutral. Both parties to the war would have the rights of belligerents. While the US Government would be required to practice impartiality in its relations with the two belligerents, private persons and companies in the US could make loans, sell arms, etc., to the insurgents. The Castro regime, on the other hand, would have the right under international law to blockade ports held by the insurgents and to stop and search American vessels on the high seas and seize vessels carrying contraband of war.

The State Department points out that the recognition of belligerency in Cuba by the US would create, in the words of the Rio treaty, a "fact or situation that might endanger the peace of America," and would thereby open the situation up to action by the OAS. Recognition of belligerency, in other words, could lay the basis for multilateral OAS action calling for an end to hostilities and supervised elections; or, failing this, for OAS quarantine of Cuba or general OAS recognition of belligerency in Cuba.

Arthur Schlesinger, jr./2/

/2/Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

115. Telegram From the Director of the Joint Staff (Wheeler) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison)

Washington, April 17, 1961, 3:35 p.m.

//Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba, Subjects, Taylor Report. Top Secret; Immediate. The rules of engagement outlined in this telegram were drafted by Cabell and given to Gray at the CIA at 3:30 a.m. on April 17. (Central Intelligence Agency, DDO/LA/COG Files: Job 82-00679R, Box 3, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, Green Study Group, Vol. II)

JCS 994247. Exclusive for Adm Dennison. Bumpy Road.

1. Effective on receipt and to continue until otherwise directed establish aircap in accordance with following restrictions:

- a. Carriers shall operate no closer than 50 miles from Cuban territory.
- b. Aircraft shall operate no closer than 15 miles to Cuban territory.
- c. No more than 4 aircraft on station at one time.

2. Paragraphs 3 B 2, 3 and 4, Appendix 2 to Annex A Operation Order CINCLANTFLT No 25-61/1/ are superseded by the following instructions:

/1/Document 87.

a. US aircraft shall attack if unfriendly aircraft makes aggressive move by opening bomb bay doors when headed toward ship to be protected or starts a strafing run on it. Attacks will not be made by US aircraft under any other condition.

b. No hot pursuit inside the 15 mile line from Cuban territory.

c. US aircraft shall not come up close to unfriendly aircraft except when attacking it.

d. If unfriendly aircraft is shot down every effort shall be made to hide the fact that such action has occurred.

3. The JCS interpret the foregoing to mean that you will establish a safe haven for friendly ships a minimum of fifteen miles off shore./2/

/2/Admiral Dennison relayed the new rules of engagement for air action to Admiral Clark at 4:56 p.m. (CINCLANTFLT telegram 172156Z to CTG 81.8, April 17; Naval Historical Center, Area Files, Bumpy Road Materials) The chronology of the operation maintained by CNO noted that 1 hour and 31 minutes elapsed between the time that JCS 994247 was sent to Admiral Dennison and the time that the new rules relayed by CINCLANT to Task Group 81.8 were received by Admiral Clark. (Bumpy Road Chronology; *ibid.*) During that time, the JCS passed to CINCLANT at 4:26 a CIA report that the *Barbara J.* and the *Atlantico* were under heavy air attack 25 miles off the coast and urgently requesting support. (JCS telegram 172126Z to CINCLANT, April 17; *ibid.*) At 4:48 p.m., CINCLANTFLT reported to JCS that one of the destroyer units of CTG 81.8 reported that CEF ships some 26.6 miles southwest of the Bay of Pigs were under attack by a Sea Fury plane. One of the ships, believed to be the *Barbara J.*, was on fire and requesting assistance. (CINCLANTFLT telegram 172148Z to JCS, April 17; *ibid.*)

116. Editorial Note

At 6 p.m. on April 17, 1961, Admiral Clark reported that the four remaining ships of the Cuban Expeditionary Force, *Blagar*, *Barbara J.*, *Atlantico*, and *Caribe*, were 55 miles off the Bay of Pigs with the two EW destroyers assigned to the area maintaining distant contact. The CEF ships were proceeding south at 5 knots. (CTG 81.8 telegram 172300Z to CINCLANTFLT, April 17; Naval Historical Center, Area Files, Bumpy Road Materials) During the early morning hours of April 18, Admiral Clark attempted to convince the CEF ships to return to Point Zulu, some 41.2 miles off the coast of Cuba. At 4:50 a.m. Clark reported that *Blagar* and *Barbara J.* had turned around and were expected to return to Point Zulu by 7 a.m. *Atlantico* and *Caribe* were still headed south, however, and the master of *Atlantico* stated that he would have trouble with his crew if he attempted to turn north, unless support from the Task Group was visible. Clark indicated that he planned to send CAP over the *Atlantico* at first light to boost morale. (CTG 81.8 telegram 180950Z to CINCLANTFLT, April 18; *ibid.*) At 5:26 a.m. Clark reported that *Atlantico* had turned north but that he was still working on the reluctant *Caribe*. (CTG 81.8 telegram 181026Z to CINCLANTFLT, April 18; *ibid.*)

Blagar and *Barbara J.* reached Point Zulu by 11 a.m. and Clark reported that there was no hostile activity in the area. The CEF ships had been under an air CAP since first light. (CTG 81.8 telegram 181604Z to CINCLANTFLT, April 18; *ibid.*) At 12:26 p.m. Clark reported that the two planes that he had sent out to search for the *Caribe* had found the ship approximately 218 miles south of the Bay of Pigs and had persuaded the master to turn north toward Cuba. (CTG 81.8 telegram 181726Z to CINCLANTFLT, April 18; *ibid.*)

117. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State

Moscow, April 18, 1961, 2 p.m.

//Source: Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 77 D 163, Pen Pal Series, 1961-1964, Special US-USSR File, 1961. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Received at 8:53 a.m. The Embassy also reported that a demonstration against U.S. involvement in Cuba began outside the Embassy at 2:35 p.m. local time. (Telegram 2552 from Moscow, April 18; *ibid.*, Central Files, 737.00/4-1861) The Soviet Government released the text of the letter to the press at the same time that it was presented to the Embassy in Moscow. The letter is also printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, May 8, 1961, p. 662. Ambassador Zorin read the text of Khrushchev's letter during debate in the First Committee on April 18. (U.N. doc. A/C.1/5R.1153)

2550. Following letter to President Kennedy from Khrushchev handed me by Acting Foreign Minister Semenov at 12:15 today. Begin text:

Mr. President, I send you this message in an hour of alarm, fraught with danger for the peace of the whole world. Armed aggression has begun against Cuba. It is a secret to no one that the armed bands invading this country were trained, equipped and armed in the United States of America. The planes which are bombing Cuban cities belong to the United States of America, the bombs they are dropping are being supplied by the American Government.

All of this evokes here in the Soviet Union an understandable feeling of indignation on the part of the Soviet Government and the Soviet people.

Only recently, in exchanging opinions through our respective representatives, we talked with you about the mutual desire of both sides to put forward joint efforts directed toward improving relations between our countries and eliminating the danger of war. Your statement a few days ago that the USA would not participate in military activities against Cuba/1/ created the impression that the top leaders of the United States were taking into account the consequences for general peace and for the USA itself which aggression against Cuba could have. How can what is being done by the United States in reality be understood, when an attack on Cuba has now become a fact?

/1/See footnote 2, Document 101.

It is still not late to avoid the irreparable. The Government of the USA still has the possibility of not allowing the flame of war ignited by interventions in Cuba to grow into an incomparable conflagration. I approach you, Mr. President, with an urgent call to put an end to aggression against the Republic of Cuba. Military armament and the world political situation are such at this time that any so-called "little war" can touch off a chain reaction in all parts of the globe.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, there should be no mistake about our position: We will render the Cuban people and their government all necessary help to repel armed attack on Cuba. We are sincerely interested in a relaxation of international tension, but if others proceed toward sharpening, we will answer them in full measure. And in general it is hardly possible so to conduct matters that the situation is settled in one area and conflagration extinguished, while a new conflagration is ignited in another area.

I hope that the Government of the USA will consider our views dictated by the sole concern not to allow steps which could lead the world to military catastrophe. End text.

Freers

118. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Battle) to the President's Special Assistant (Schlesinger)

Washington, undated.

//Source: Department of State, Central Files, 737.00/4-1861. Secret. Sent through Presidential Special Assistant Ralph A. Dungan. Drafted by J.P. Hoover in ARA on April 18.

SUBJECT

Cuba Contingency Plan

Pursuant to your conversation with Mr. Coerr of April 18, 1961, I am enclosing the original of the Cuba Contingency Plan.

Since it may have some additional interest, I am also enclosing a penultimate draft of the plan/1/ which touches on broader aspects of the possible post-Castro situation such as United States objectives, conditions for recognition, etc.

/1/Not printed.

You will observe that the Contingency Plan is being sent to you before it has been submitted to the Secretary.

L.D. Battle/2/

/2/Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

Attachment/3/

/3/Secret. Drafted by Hoover on March 24.

POSSIBLE US ASSISTANCE TO A FRIENDLY CUBAN GOVERNMENT AND SOME IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS AFFECTING US-CUBAN RELATIONS

1. A friendly government in Cuba might request from the US assistance in the following fields:

(a) Loans and/or grants for critical foreign exchange needs.

(b) PL-480/4/ foodstuffs.

/4/The Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954; 68 Stat. 454, et seq.

(c) Critical medical and public health supplies, and technical assist-ance.

(d) Loans and/or grants providing local currency for immediate budgetary support.

(e) Joint planning, in cooperation with the Cuban government and multilateral agencies and within the context of the "Act of Bogota"/5/ and the "Kennedy Program",/6/ toward programs for the economic, social and political reconstruction and development of Cuba.

/5/Recommendation I of the Report of the Secretary General of the OAS to the Council of the OAS, October 11, 1960. For text, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1960*, pp. 293-299.

/6/An apparent reference to the Alliance for Progress proposed by President Kennedy in his inaugural address and in his initial State of the Union Address. See *ibid.*, pp. 8 and 18-19.

(f) Cooperative arrangements, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis, for programs in such fields as the following: (i) Agrarian reform, agricultural improvement and diversification; (ii) Educational reconstruction; (iii) Public administration and Civil Service improvement; (iv) Technical and development assistance; (v) Accelerated industrial expansion and diversification; (vi) Increased employment.

2. Financial Assistance.

(a) General. The provision of immediate financial assistance for both critical foreign exchange needs and budgetary support will be required to permit the government to operate until lines of credit can be reopened and the economy can function again. Presumably, this period will not exceed 60-90 days, by which time, in addition to re-established commercial credits, action by other agencies in the nature of stand-by agreements, stabilization loans, etc., may have been taken.

(b) Foreign Exchange. It is estimated that there should be immediately available \$35 million to cover foreign exchange needs during the early critical period. This amount should be provided on a grant basis calling upon Cuba to deposit counterpart equivalent in local currency, which may in turn be granted or loaned by the US for budgetary support or other agreed-on purposes. (See Tab A)/7/

/7/None of the attachments cited in the contingency plan is printed.

(c) Budgetary Support. It is estimated that approximately \$15 million per month may be required for budgetary support to enable a new Cuban government to continue paying salaries and wages of the minimum number of government employees and workers needed to maintain essential administrative services. The total required under this heading would be \$45 million, which, if determined necessary, should be provided from counterpart funds generated from the grant \$35 million contingency funds under 2(b) above, and as necessary by additional grant or loan. (See Tab B)

(d) Need for New Currency. If the convertibility of the Cuban currency to a par with the US dollar is to be restored, it will probably be necessary for a new Cuban government to issue new currency, exchanging the new for old bills on the basis of a rate determined to represent a fair value in relation to the dollar at the time. A prospective new Cuban government ought to have prepared in advance a new currency issue of approximately \$500 million, (see Tab C) which would probably require a currency stabilization loan of approximately \$100 million.

3. Immediate Foodstuffs Requirements.

(a) General. It is probable that a successor Cuban government will encounter an immediate need in feeding parts of the population owing to the interference of civil disorder, etc., in the normal production of local foodstuffs and to the presumed failure of the Castro government to maintain imports of basic necessities in sufficient quantity. (See Tab D)

(b) Quantities and Value. The following commodities will probably be required in the indicated amounts, and advance arrangements should be made to supply them under Title I of PL-480, during an immediate period of 60 days.

Commodity: Lard

Metric Tons: 13,000

Approx. Value: \$3,000,000

Commodity: Evaporated milk

Metric Tons: 1,000

Approx. Value: \$300,000

Commodity: Corn

Metric Tons: 18,000

Approx. Value: \$1,000,000

Commodity: Rice

Metric Tons: 35,000

Approx. Value: \$7,350,000

Commodity: Wheat

Metric Tons: 23,000

Approx. Value: \$1,850,000

Commodity: Wheat flour

Metric Tons: 15,000

Approx. Value: \$1,500,000

Total Approx. Value: \$15,000,000

Note: Any of the above not available through PL-480 should be financed by contingency funds.

(c) Channels of Distribution. It is recommended that the distribution of the foregoing quantities of food within Cuba be handled by a joint committee composed of representatives of the successor Cuban government and of an American liaison group to serve temporarily as an adjunct of the Embassy. The joint committee should determine the proportions of the supplies to be made available for free distribution to the needy, for handling by voluntary relief agencies, and for sale to the public through existing registered food dealers. (See Tab E)

If internal transportation facilities are seriously disrupted, the successor Cuban government may find it necessary to undertake distribution directly to retail outlets.

Any sales proceeds would be granted for work relief, direct economic development, or economic development activities in the Cuban budget. Concurrently a Title I program for meeting the continuing commercial requirements should be developed.

(d) Procurement in the US. Procurement and shipment in the US should be handled in accordance with established procedures under Title II of PL-480. Outward freight charges have not been taken into account in the values indicated in (b) above, but should be assumed by the US.

(e) Stockpiling in the US. In the belief that stocks of the basic commodities listed under (b) above are normally available at storage points at or near Gulf and East Coast ports, no special advance preparations would appear to be necessary for the stockpiling of foodstuffs for Cuba.

4. Non-Food Requirements.

(a) General. In addition to financial assistance and supplies of foods, it is anticipated that immediate supplies of non-food items will be required for the rehabilitation of critical installations such as electric power, telephones and other communications, oil refineries, docks and transportation; and machinery spares, tires, automotive spares, steel bearings, fuels, lubricants, iron and steel semi-manufactures, copper products, fertilizers, dyes and chemicals, textile fibers and yarns, wood pulp, plastic molding materials, etc., for restoring important local industries to production. (See Tabs F & G) There will also be a need for medical and public health supplies.

(b) Medical and Public Health Needs. Medical problems may arise, whether from military action, lack of doctors and supplies, or from a period of public disorder or paralysis cutting off medical supplies and shutting down health services. These problems might be met by emergency shipment of medicines, medical supplies, and equipment parts and replacements. The return of Cuban doctors, nurses and other medical personnel to Cuba should be facilitated by urgent means, and possibly a team of US doctors and sanitary engineers should also be sent to evaluate the situation and establish the basis for larger scale assistance. Dispatch of a hospital ship from the Atlantic Fleet would be a dramatic means of providing medical assistance. It is estimated that approximately \$500,000 might be needed for medical and public health supplies, included in the \$35 million in 2 (b) above.

(c) Rehabilitation of Critical Installations. It is assumed that critical installations will have been subjected to sabotage and other damage although the extent of damage cannot be foreseen, and that it will be of the utmost urgency to restore these installations to at least minimum operation.

Preliminary discussions have been held with representatives of the Cuban Electric Company and the Cuban Telephone Company alerting them to the necessity of having competent technical personnel ready on short notice to appraise the needs for rehabilitation parts and supplies.

It is estimated that emergency funds in the amount of \$5 million be on hand (included in the \$35 million mentioned in 2 (b) above) for this purpose. The major probable demands of supplies and parts follow:

Cuban Electric Company--\$2.0 million

Cuban Telephone Company--1.5 million

Oil Refineries--.5 million

Railways--1.0 million