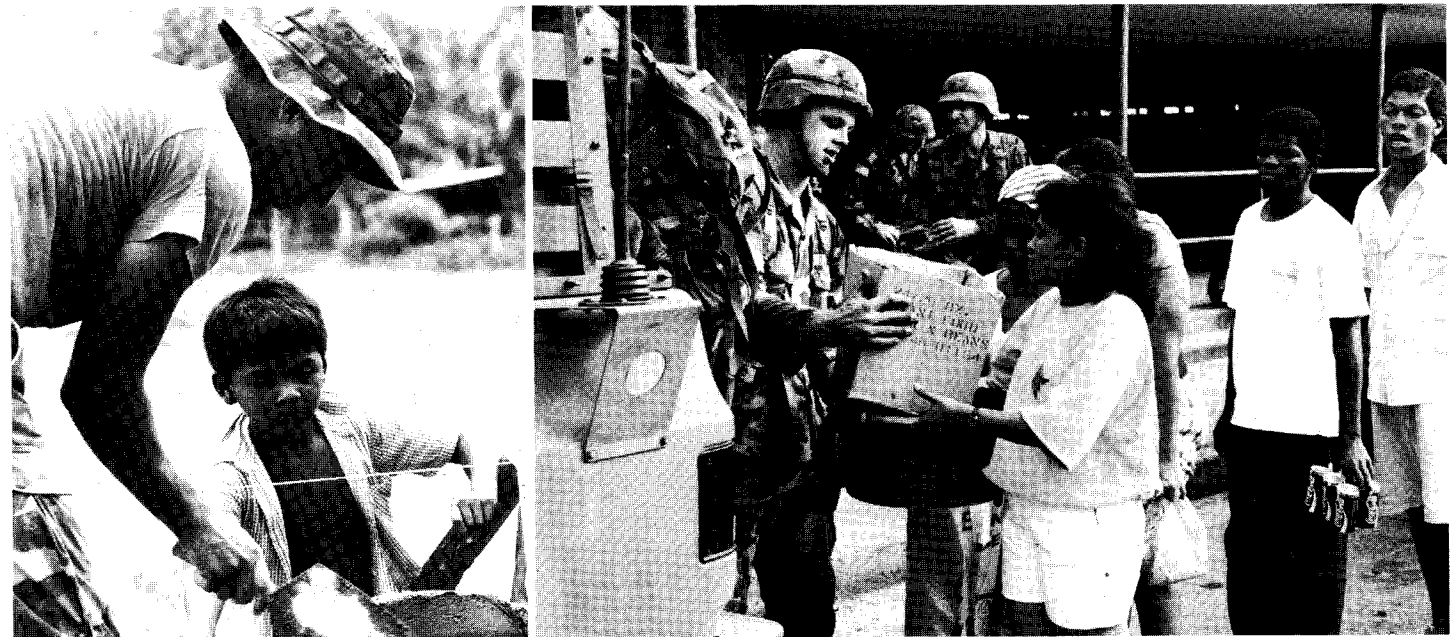


# Special Warfare

The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School



# Letters

## Special Warfare

### 'The Jesuits' re-viewed

I took exception to the review of the book, *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church*. The review by Lt. Col. David Decker in the Winter 1990 issue not only indicated an inadequate knowledge of the Jesuits, but also a superficial view of revolutionary warfare.

In the latest issue of the Jesuit periodical, *America* (29 September 90), the Superior General of the Jesuit order, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, discussed the Martin book:

"I think he (Martin) has a novelist's fertile imagination and that his book is first and foremost a novel from which the obligatory disclaimer has been omitted: 'Any resemblance to actual people or events is purely accidental.'"

"Martin represents me, for example, as talking to people whom I have never met in my life."

The Jesuits, celebrating their 450th year of existence, do indeed infuriate and antagonize people like me with a rather conservative viewpoint, as do the Maryknoll Fathers. I stopped my subscription to the Maryknoll periodical some years ago because of their slavish adulation of Fidel Castro. Nevertheless, the Jesuits and the Maryknoll Fathers often represent the only defender of the poor, the oppressed, the landless; they represent the "Church of the Poor." To whom else can the peasant turn? In my opinion, had the entire Church bureaucracy followed the lead of the relatively few Jesuits and represented the people instead of the state, the likes of Ortega and Castro would have not come to power in the first place, and the

death and destruction in El Salvador might have been averted.

Decker seems to have adopted the view that "liberation theology" is an intrinsic evil. Nowhere in the Scriptures does Christ enjoin His disciples to go forth and defend the nobility, the landowners and military cliques. If the Marxists have manipulated liberation theology, it is only because we have, as Colonel Decker's review so well illustrates, allowed them full rein as we set ourselves against their agendas. Once again we seem to be aligning ourselves with the privileged against the disenfranchised. Moral issues aside, it is a sure recipe for another counterrevolutionary failure. Instead of looking for Marxist priests, we should be learning from the Jesuits and liberation theology.

Finally, rather than be worried about Soviet penetration of the Society of Jesus, I am concerned that so little has been learned from the annals of revolutionary war by those charged with teaching it at the Command and General Staff College.

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### UN duty has advantages

Special Forces officers are always looking to go to strange places, meet interesting people and ply their linguistic skills. This is particularly true if they hold a functional area of either Foreign Area Officer or Psychological Operations/Civil Affairs. There may be no better opportunity to do this than a year's tour of duty with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East.

The organization was established

in 1948 as a small group of military observers assigned to assist Count Folke Bernadotte in his attempt to arrange a cease fire between fledgling Israel and five Arab countries intent on "driving the Jews into the sea." There have been many wars, truces, cease fires and only one peace accord. Through it all, UN military observers from many nations have tried to assist in the effort to bring genuine peace to a troubled region. Some of them have died in the performance of their duties.

Environmentally, the Middle East is not what you might think; extremes from blistering desert to snow-capped mountains can be found. Some areas like those along the Nile and Jordan Rivers are lush with vegetation. Egypt's Sinai Peninsula contains some of the most forbidding and beautifully rugged terrain anywhere on the globe and has a history that spans millennia. The entire area provides opportunities for the study of survival techniques in wide varieties of terrain and climatic conditions.

If one is interested in military history, it is in abundance there and has been written on in great detail, particularly the subject of the various Arab-Israeli wars. The opportunity to examine, at first hand, the battlefields near the Giddi and Mitla passes in the Sinai Desert is a once-in-a-lifetime chance.

By mission, Special Forces officers must possess the ability to work closely with soldiers of other nations. No assignment provides more challenges in this regard than the UN. Cross-cultural communication is an everyday affair. Officers from 15 other countries serve as

UN observers (many don't use English as their first language). Additionally, observers deal daily with the native populations in whatever region they are assigned.

There is a plethora of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity throughout the region. Although Arabic is spoken most commonly, it is spoken in different dialects from Morocco to Iraq.

This is a joint tour of one year's duration, although some officers are permitted to extend. With the exception of the Chief of the U.S. Military Observer Group in Jerusalem, all billets are designated for either captains or majors. Those who serve here normally receive the Joint Services Commendation and United Nations Peace Keeping Medals. The environment is one which is not only joint but combined and foreign as well. This adds to the complexity of the assignment and also makes it one of the most fascinating tours available to officers of any branch or service.

Since observation duties are not time-intensive, a tour with the UN is a perfect time to complete CGSC by correspondence or pursue other educational opportunities. The UN also provides 18 days of leave which can be used for regional travel.

For the most part American officers who serve there are volunteers. They come from many branches and all services. Although the U.S. does not pay to bring families to the region, many officers do pay out-of-pocket to have their families with them during the tour. UN per diem is generous and helps to cushion the impact of expenses incurred with a family move. Potentially an officer can be assigned in Syria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and other countries where peacekeeping is required. Currently Americans are not permitted to serve in Lebanon.

The challenges and rewards of a

UN assignment are many and varied. It is without question a unique tour of duty which is only limited by the imagination of the officer.

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*(Maj. Blevins completed a UN tour as senior UN military observer in the Sinai desert in November 1989. Maj. Adolph spent six months serving with the UN Military Observer Group - Egypt and six months assigned to Observation Group - Lebanon. Both are SF officers currently attending CGSC. — Editor)*

### Send beret to museum

I would like to use your forum to get something off my chest that has always been aggravating but recently became even more so.

The late President John F. Kennedy awarded the green beret to Special Forces soldiers, a small, elite unit of highly dedicated professionals with specialized training in the art of unconventional warfare.

The green beret, a mark of excellence and a symbol of distinction, was sought after by America's best soldiers. Once earned, it was proudly worn by those who proved themselves worthy.

I understand that Department of the Army started awarding the Special Forces tab to be a visual designator of that select group of men who have earned the title "Special Forces." I also understand that non-Special Forces soldiers assigned to one of the SF groups would want a green beret to look like the other soldiers in the unit.

However, many supporting units not actually assigned to an SF group, but assigned to 1st Special Operations Command (now Army

Special Forces Command), have exchanged their maroon berets for green ones and sewn on their own flash and unit crest.

The quality of soldiers that are wearing a green beret in these supporting units, male or female, while good enough to be in that unit doing his or her job, hardly qualifies them to be Special Forces.

My suggestion for a solution to the problem of putting all soldiers of such a diversified command in common headgear would be to retire the green beret to the JFK Special Warfare Museum, while it still represents that which it has symbolized, and put all the soldiers under the BDU cap. I wonder how many would stay if this were to happen?

I need to mention that this is my personal opinion, and while shared by many, does not necessarily reflect the opinion of my command or the U.S. Army.

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*(For uniformity, the 1st Special Operations Command [now Army Special Forces Command] put all its soldiers in the green beret in April 1990, according to Maj. Craig Barta, USAFC public affairs officer. When the command became the Army Special Forces Command, it adopted the arrowhead shoulder patch formerly worn only by the SF groups, and that, too, is now worn by all members of the command, including headquarters and support personnel, Barta said. Only the SF tab and the SF branch insignia remain what President Kennedy called, "a mark of distinction." For more on the SF tab and the new Army SF command, see this issue's "Update" section. — Editor)*

*Because of production delays, this is the first issue of Special Warfare since Vol. 3, No. 1, which appeared in August 1990. We regret any confusion which the jump in issue numbers may cause among those who catalog or collect our publication. — Editor*