

2 MERCENARIES KILLED-CASTRO

T-# 11/11/66
Invaders Are Said Armed
with 'Yankee' Guns

By BOB M. GASSAWAY
MIAMI (AP) — Fidel Castro said Sunday his troops killed two mercenaries from the United States and captured three others in two weekend battles in Cuba. The Cuban chief of state said the invaders were armed with modern automatic weapons of the "Yankee Army."

Castro said four of his own men were killed and two more wounded.

Castro made the disclosure in an unusual personal communique broadcast on Radio Havana and monitored in Miami.

The broadcast did not say how many mercenaries landed in Cuba, but Prime Minister Castro indicated the number was small. He pointed out they landed Friday—the ninth anniversary of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

Castro did not say the mercenaries were Americans, but said they came from the United States.

In Washington, a spokesman for the State Department said it had no information on Castro's statement except for news dispatches.

None of the militant anti-Castro groups in Miami's Cuban exile colony immediately claimed credit for the attack, although some of them have bragged previously that they sent guerrilla bands to the Communist island.

However, a spokesman for the militant exile anti-Castro organization, Alpha 66, said: "An expedition like this was on our program."

But Alpha 66 Secretary-General Andres Nazario Sargen added, "We can neither affirm nor deny at this time that it was our force that was involved in the battle. We are waiting for news."

Capt. Vicente Mendez, Alpha 66 military commander, was reported away. His wife, Dulce Maria, was in tears awaiting news at Alpha 66 headquarters in Miami.

Last fall Mendez sent Castro a
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PHANTOM WERE ALLEGED.

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cablegram saying he would go to Cuba.

On Dec. 29 a boat carrying a 15-man force headed by Mendez sank in Cuban waters. One man was reported drowned. The others made it to the U.S. Guantanamo Naval Base and later returned to Miami. Alpha 66 said at the time that Mendez would try again.

Mendez, 39, fought against dictator Fulgencio Batista and later against Castro before going into exile.

"A group of mercenaries coming from the United States, equipped with modern automatic arms of the Yankee Army, landed near the Yumuri River 14 miles east of the city of Baracea Friday, April 17, at dawn," Castro said. Baracea is in Oriente Province, near the eastern tip of Cuba.

"Almost immediately, army forces, country militia and units of the border patrol made the first contact with the mercenaries, capturing two prisoners and seizing two automatic rifles, 2,000 bullets and numerous packages of plastic explosives," Castro said.

"A tenacious hunt for the rest

of the group was started immediately. Yesterday at 4:23 p.m. our forces established contact again in chasing the enemy.

"Four courageous combatants of the revolution lost their lives and two were gravely wounded. During the action, two mercenaries were killed and a third one was taken prisoner. A hunt for the mercenaries continues," Castro said.

Such a communique over Castro's signature is unusual. However, he may have issued it himself because his brother, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, is in Moscow as part of the Cuban delegation for the 100th birthday celebration of Nikolai Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union.

Castro said the attackers "come again to spill the blood" of Cubans "while the people and the majority of our combatants are engaged wholly in the sugar harvest and the economic development of the country."

"These bandit activities form part of the imperialist plan to obstruct and hamper the sugar harvest," Castro said. "Even if dozens of bands like these land in Cuba, they will be exterminated with the minimum deployment of forces. Those who survive will have to face the justice of the revolution in all its sternness."

Castro has staked the honor of his revolution on his promise to harvest 100 million tons of sugar crop ever was 7.2 million tons this year. The nation's biggest in 1952.