Crack U.S.-Equipped Battalion Is Airlifted to Oriente Front

Cuban Army Unit Joins in The Big Push

By FRANCIS L. McCARTHY
United Press International

Cuba has thrown its crack infantry unit into the extermination campaign against rebel elements in the Sierra Maestra Mountains area, United Press learned today.

The 1st Battalion of the First Infantry Regiment, advised and equipped by the United States, has entered the "big push" against rebels, reported sources said. The 10-man unit has been advised by the U.S. military mission to Cuba and equipped with the most modern weapons, it comprises five companies of 100 men each. The entire battalion was transported to the battle scene by air from its staging grounds, the Cuban Army C.I.F.A. Camp Columbia.

(Use of the American-advised and equipped unit against rebel forces does not, however, constitute a violation of the Cuban-U.S. military aid agreement. The enabling legislation passed in Washington setting up the mutual aid program specifically states that such units may be used "to maintain internal security and order" as well as in the defense of the Western Hemisphere.)

The disclosure coincided with reports of the capture by army units of the highest mountain top (over 6,000 feet) near Pico Turquino. Information received from the Cuban authorities claims that 100 families from the Sierra Maestra range were evacuated to Santiago during the week-end.

Army sources confidently predicted they would eradicate the rebel revolt center "within a week." They said they would use "every means at our disposal."

These sources said bombs dropped on rebel hideouts helicopter have been largely ineffective because they exploded on contact with trees and rocks. It was understood their new "saturation bombing" program would be concentrated in and around Pico Turquino, Cuba's highest mountain top (over 6,000 feet).

There have been no reports of further military activities since Friday's pre-dawn clash was the only one reported to be under way in the region. There was no indication of when the maneuver would conclude.

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Invasion Yacht—The yacht "Coral" shown in Cuba is registered in Miami. (United Press radiophoto.)

Ex-VEP WALLACE
To Talk In Preston

Former United States Vice President Henry Wallace arrived in Havana on Saturday night and will leave for Preston in Oriente Province on Wednesday.

On Saturday he will deliver an address at the Methodist Mission School "Escuela Agricola e Industrial."

The school has been established by the Methodists on land donated by the United Fruit Company to educate rural boys. It is directed by Richard Milne, an agricultural expert.