

# On the Spot Report of Uvero Battle

EDITOR'S NOTE: Al Waldron, a United Press cameraman, was the first American to enter El Uvero after last Thursday's rebel attack on the Army garrison there. Here is his first-hand report on what occurred.

By AL WALDRON

EL UVERO, Oriente, Cuba—(UP)—This tiny milling town of some 500 people will never be the same again after last Thursday's surprise attack by revolutionary troops on the Cuban army garrison stationed here.

Nestled on the water's edge, surrounded by mountains, El Uvero boasts some 20 to 30 houses, most of them bohios with wooden roofs covered by tar paper. There is a small dock for loading lumber.

The attack occurred at five o'clock in the morning. The rebel force, estimated at from 150 to 200 men, encamped in the mountain slopes overlooking the town.

They must have had help from within the town for they knew exactly the houses in which the army troops were billeted.

The garrison never knew from what direction the attack was coming. A house with nine soldiers sleeping in it, protected by a machinegun nest with one soldier on guard, was riddled and nearly torn to pieces, in the first wild shooting.

The army machine gun nest was knocked out in quick order by a hand grenade thrown from a distance of some 50 feet, and it left the town open for entry.

The rebels ransacked the small town. They took all guns and ammunition and seized all of the foodstuffs in the town's only "bodega." They left \$100 to pay for what the "bodeguero" estimated was worth \$350. Merchandise ranged from tinned milk to bottled beer.

They retired around 7:30 a.m. in Babun Lumber Company trucks loaded down with their gains and with army prisoners in the rear so that they could not be

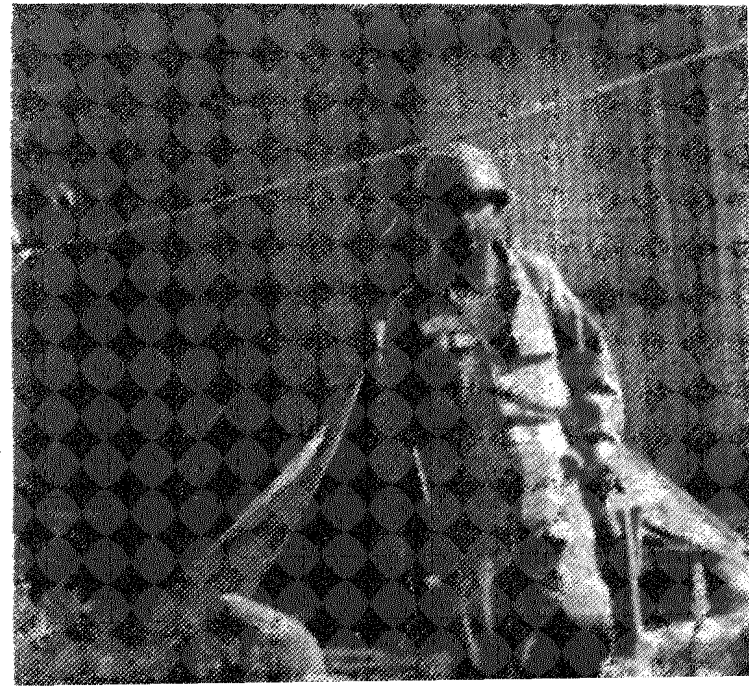
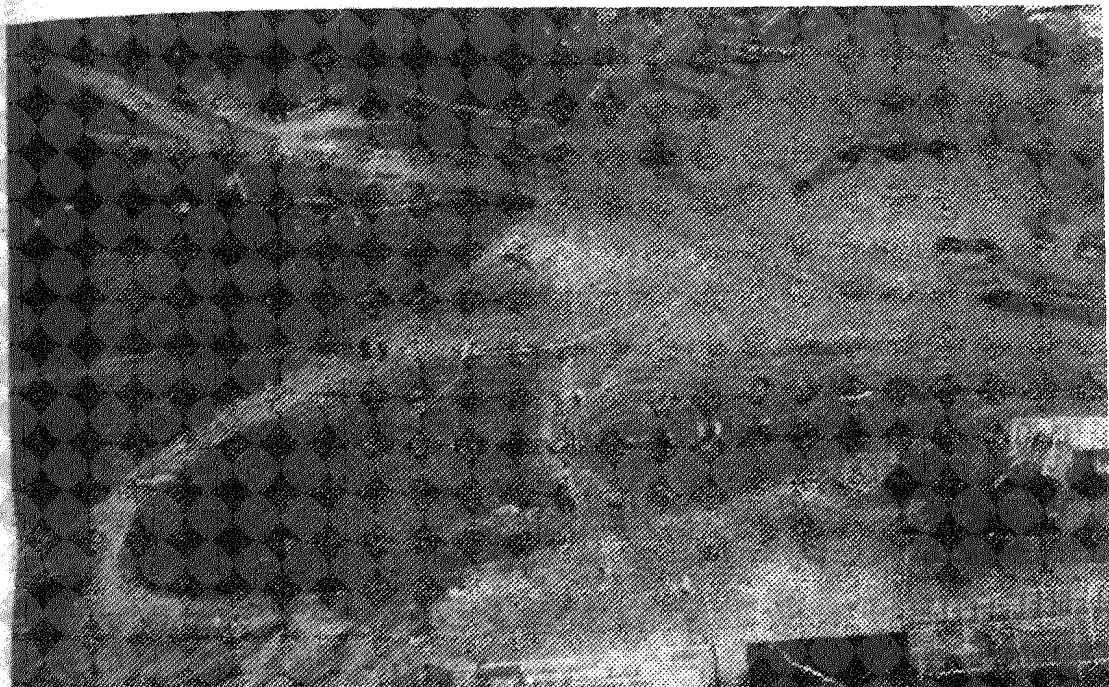
fired upon in retreat. Trucks were abandoned about three kilometers away, when the road became impassable, and the rebels carried their loot into the mountains.

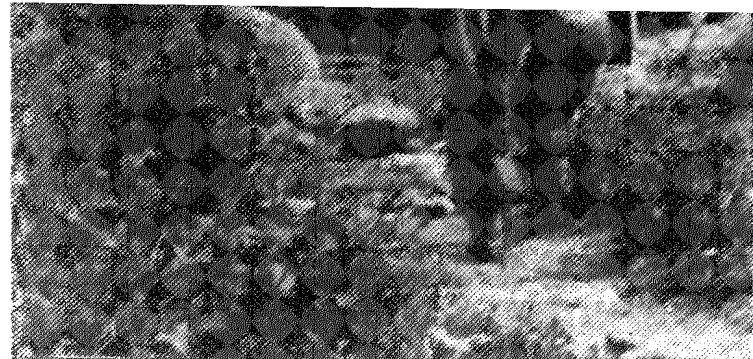
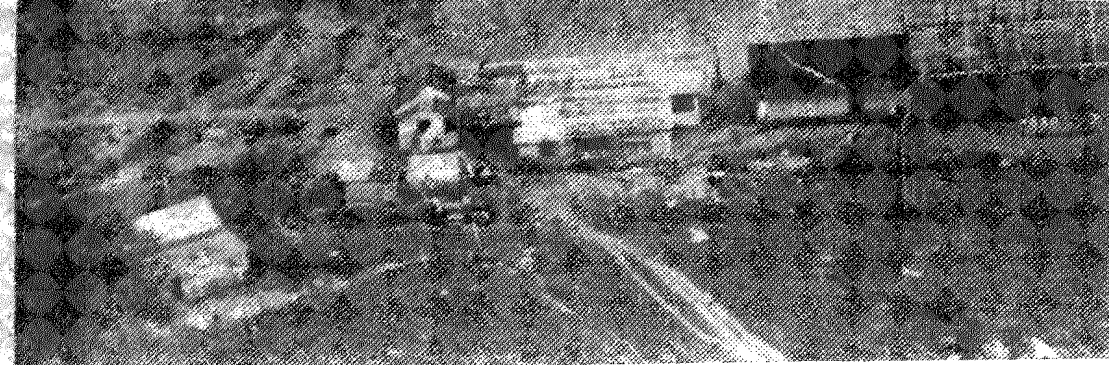
Garrison survivors managed to radio their plight to army headquarters in Santiago and a Cuban coastguard vessel was rushed to the scene to evacuate the dead and wounded. Fresh reinforcements also poured in.

The dead and wounded were evacuated by small boat from the lumber company dock at water's edge.

The rebel raiders left the town bare of food supplies. When this United Press reporter arrived, a cow was being dissected for food.

I made the trip to El Uvero in a single-engined DeHavilland Beaver aircraft operated by the Cuban air force. It landed on an improvised 250-foot strip of pasture land. The landing was made without problem despite a cow and several pigs on the runway.





**WHERE REBELS ATTACKED IN ORIENTE**—In the early morning hours of May 30, revolutionary forces of Fidel Castro swept down on the Cuban Army garrison in the little lumber town of El Uvero, above left, in the Sierra Maestra, killing 11, wounding 19 and capturing a score of others. First American to reach the scene was Al Waldron United Press cameraman who took the pictures on this page. The aerial shot of El Uvero shows the barracks where the 60-man Army garrison was housed. Rebel forces estimated at nearly 200 men fired into the barracks from the nearby mountain slopes surrounding the tiny seaport. Area in left-hand corner of picture is improved air strip. In picture at upper right a Cuban Army guard with a Tommygun slung over his shoulder leaves the post's radio station from which word was first flashed to outside world of attack. At bottom left, a Cuban Navy cutter patrols the waters off El Uvero to sight and prevent further landings of rebel units along the Oriente coast. And bottom right United Press' Waldron is seen in background with Cuban Army man who is pointing out direction from which attack was launched. In foreground is a Cuban Army light plane and crew.

