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THE US ARMY SPECIAL FORCES

The men of the Special Forces, only soldiers of the US Army authorized by presidential order to wear a beret as part of their uniform, constitute the elite of our military forces.

Selected on the basis of intelligence, maturity, character, moral integrity, and military knowledge, these men have to serve at least one year in the Army and be Airborne qualified before becoming eligible for special forces duty. Once the application is submitted the special forces candidate must satisfactorily pass a series of physical and mental tests before reporting to the Special Forces Training Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina for special forces training. At the Training Group they will receive intensive training in the five basic skills of special forces: weapons, medicine, communication, demolitions, and operations and intelligence.

Upon completion of weapons training a special forces weapons specialist is capable of disassembly, assembly, and effectively firing most small arms of the nations of the world.

A special forces medic, one of the best trained individuals in the US Army, is qualified to perform minor surgery and amputations, extract appendixes, and do some dental work. His training is climaxed by several months of on-the-job training at the Fort Sam Houston Army Hospital. This man will be

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responsible for the health of the detachment members once committed deep behind enemy lines where professional medical care will almost certain be impossible to get.

The communications personnel receive training in the use of the International Morse Code and are required to be able to send and receive eighteen words per minute using Morse Code. These men are also trained in how to establish communication systems within a guerrilla warfare operational area by using radios, wire, and native personnel in clandestine communications.

The demolitions NCO is also the engineer in the detachment. He is proficient in the use of US military and civilian explosives in addition to explosives of certain foreign countries. He can make explosives using ingredients found in any home and is an expert in the techniques of destroying roads, railroads, and bridges and in the use of demolitions in raids and ambushes.

The operations and intelligence personnel receive training in the preparation of area studies and area assessments, training programs and schedules, and in the mechanics of establishing an escape and evasion net. They are also thoroughly familiar with the techniques of order of battle.

Every attempt is made to have these men as cross-trained as possible by giving them training in at least one additional skill. This will insure continuity in the detachment. As an

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example of this we try to make every special forces soldier capable of sending and receiving at least five words per minute using Morse Code.

Besides his studies in language, sociology and area studies, the special forces soldier receives training in special combat techniques not normally received by the average American soldier. These may include mountaineering, survival in the jungle, advanced tactics in land, sea, and air infiltration, psychological operations, civic actions, hand to hand combat, and underwater demolition.

After completing his basic training in special forces, which is climaxed by a three weeks training exercise in the field, the new special forces soldier is assigned to any of six US Special Forces Groups around the world: the 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa; the 10th Special Forces Group in Germany; the 8th Special Forces Group in Panama; or the 5th, 6th and 7th Special Forces Groups in Fort Bragg.

As a result of the fine training received by special forces men, an officer once described them as having the intelligence of a genius, the moral qualities of a mountain, and the instinct of a murderer.

Still another officer said that while Marines are eight feet tall, they were still two feet shorter than a special forces man.

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Let us now take a look at this Group to which the new special forces man has been assigned. Its organization is as shown in figure 1.

The Headquarters Company provides communications, administrative, training, intelligence and logistical support for assigned special forces elements prior to and after deployment.¹

The mission of the signal company is to provide signal communication for the special forces group and the deployed detachments, and to provide third and limited fourth echelon maintenance of signal equipment organic to the group except aviation electronics.²

The aviation company provides support in:

1. unconventional warfare in a general or limited war
2. counter insurgency operations and civic actions in cold war
3. support of psychological operations as required³

The Special Forces Company (Fig 2) is composed of one C detachment,(Fig 3), three B detachments (Fig 4), and twelve A detachments (Fig 5).

¹FM 31-21, Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations (Department of the Army, Sept 1961), p.19

²Supplemental Material, Special Forces and Psychological warfare in Counter Insurgency Operations (US Army Armor School), p.3

³Ibid., p.4

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The C detachment commands subordinate detachments, conducts guerrilla warfare, counter insurgency and counter guerrilla operations. The commanding officer of this detachment is also the commander of the special forces company.

In addition to being able to conduct guerrilla warfare the B detachments have operational control over subordinate A detachments

The A detachment is the basic unit of the special forces company. It is capable of conducting operations in two different places at the same time by splitting the detachment. It can effectively train and control a total of 1,500 guerrillas.

The administrative detachment performs the normal administrative functions of a company headquarters.⁴

The mission of the special forces group is two-fold:

1. The cold war mission is to advise, train, and assist indigenous forces in the conduct of counter insurgency operation. Special forces also help in civic action programs such as building school houses, water wells, repairing roads, and by using the detachment medic, provide medical assistance to needy civilians.

2. The hot war mission is to infiltrate by air, land, or water to develop, organize, equip, train, and direct indigenous

⁴FM 31-21, Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations (Department of the Army, Sept 1961), p.21

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forces in the conduct of guerrilla warfare. Special Forces will be responsible for all unconventional warfare activities within guerrilla warfare operational areas and may be called upon to perform other tasks associated with or in support of guerrilla warfare.

Even though this mission would be carried out with the utmost secrecy, it is not to be considered clandestine or thought of in terms of spying operations. The Special Forces personnel would dress in US Army uniforms and in case of capture, would at least in theory, be treated as prisoners of war according to the Geneva Convention.

The best known contribution of the special forces soldier in recent years has been the training which he is giving to the Montagnard tribesmen of Central South Vietnam. Special Forces detachments are generally assigned to isolated camps somewhere in the Vietnam mountains where they work together with the Vietnamese Special Forces in training and supporting the many Strike Force companies which are composed exclusively of tribesmen. The job is very challenging especially if we consider that the Montagnard have a tremendous dislike for the Vietnamese who look upon them as an inferior class. Special Forces personnel are helping to bring about the acceptance of the Vietnamese government by the Highlanders.

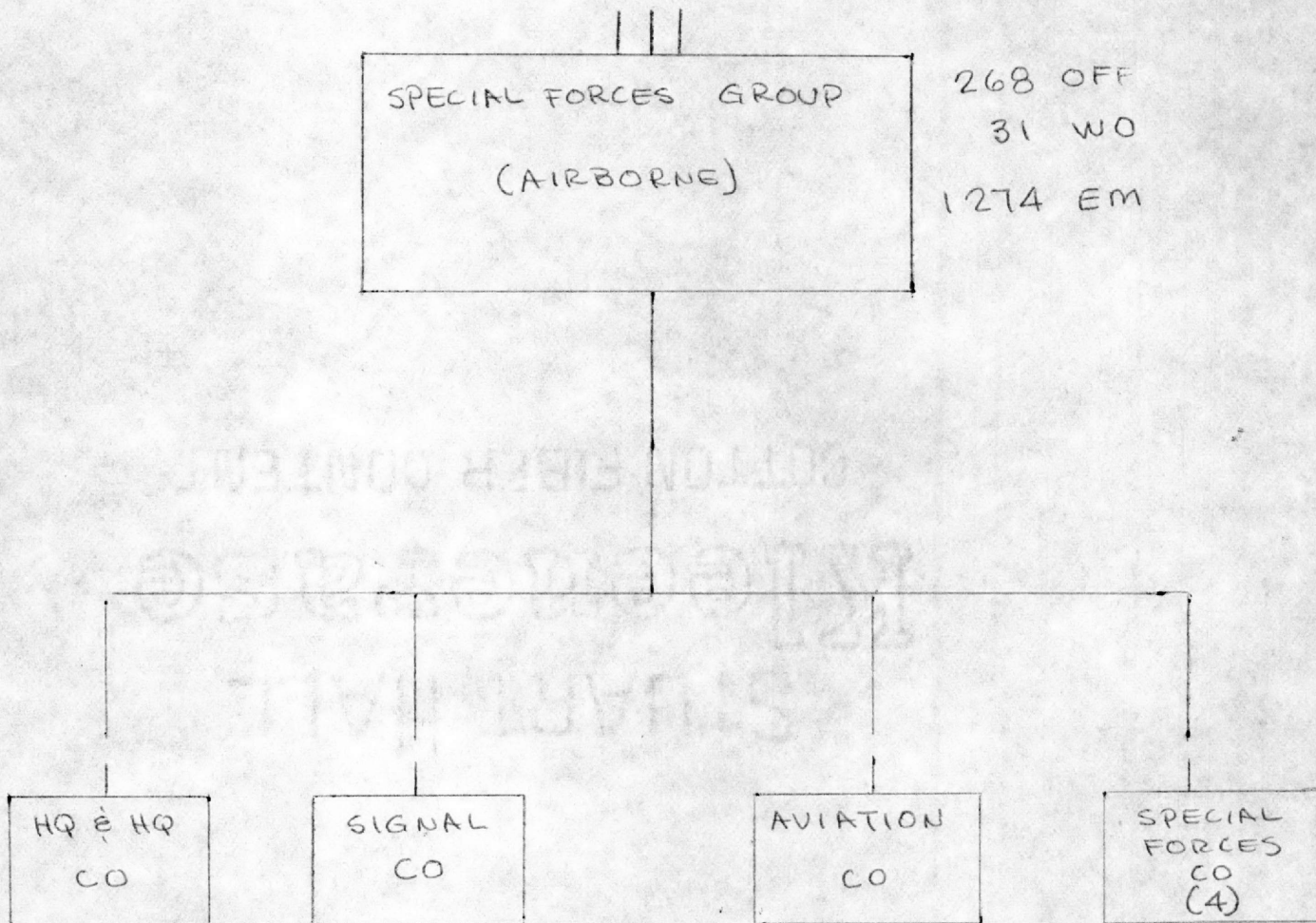
The US Army Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, N. C. offers special forces training to other components of our

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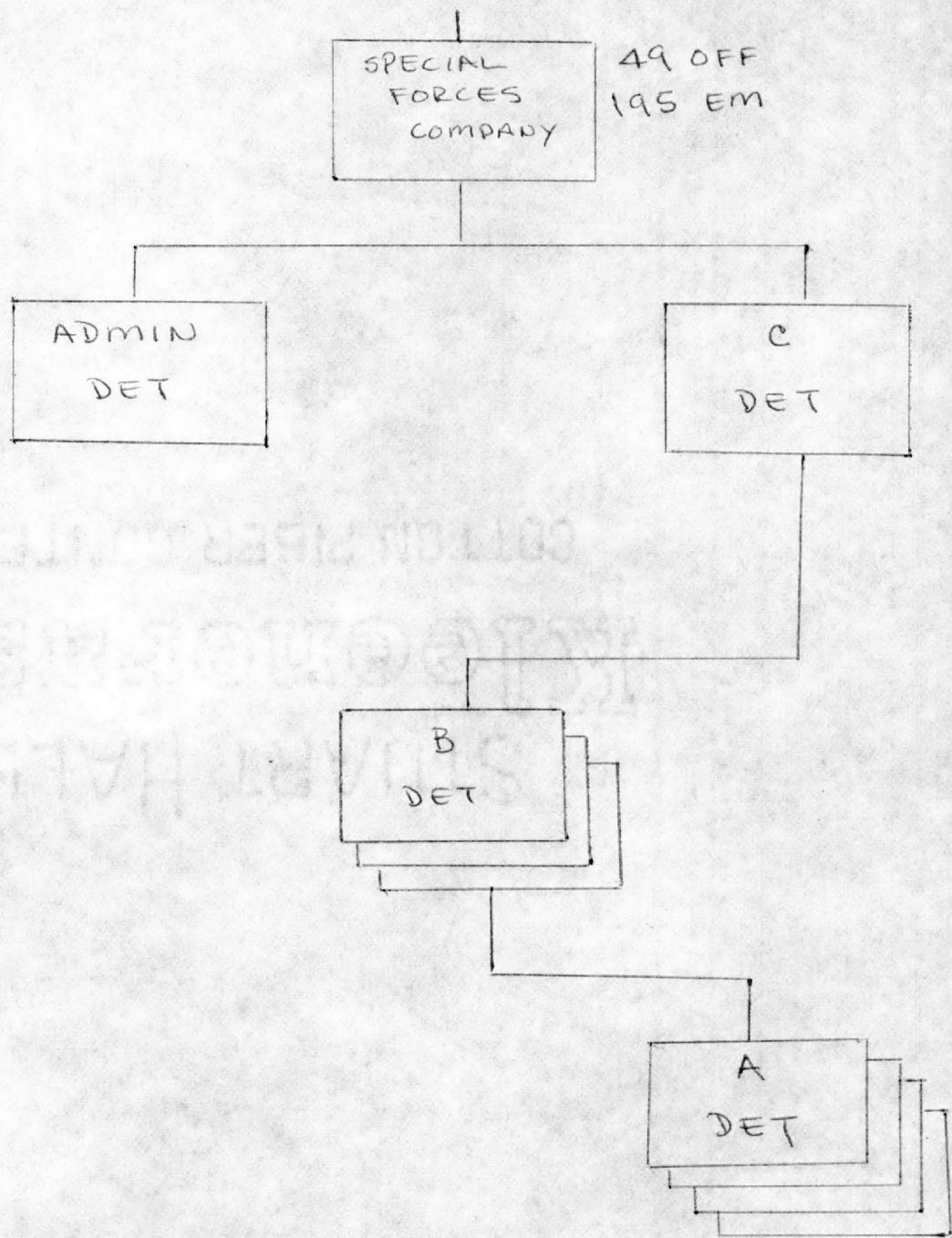
Armed Forces and to officers from allied nations such as Vietnam, Laos, Venezuela, Guatemala, Nationalist China and Costa Rica. It is not uncommon to hear several different languages being spoken around the Center.

The fine working relations which are established with our allied officers while at the Center, aid in the carrying out of the first mission of Special Forces.

All of us in Special Forces hope that it will never be necessary to implement the second mission and thus convert the lands of a friendly country, or even the land of our own United States in a guerrilla warfare operational area.



THE SPECIAL FORCES GROUP
FIG 1



SPECIAL FORCES COMPANY

FIG 2

CO - LT COL



XO - MAJ



S1 - CAPT



S2 CAPT



S3 CAPT



S4 CAPT



SMAJ



E-9

ADMIN
SUPV



E6

INTEL
SGT



E-8

OPNS
SGT



E-8

SUPPLY
SGT



E8

ASST
SUPPLY
SGT



E-7

RAD OPRTR
SUP



E6

RAD OPRTR
(4)



E-5

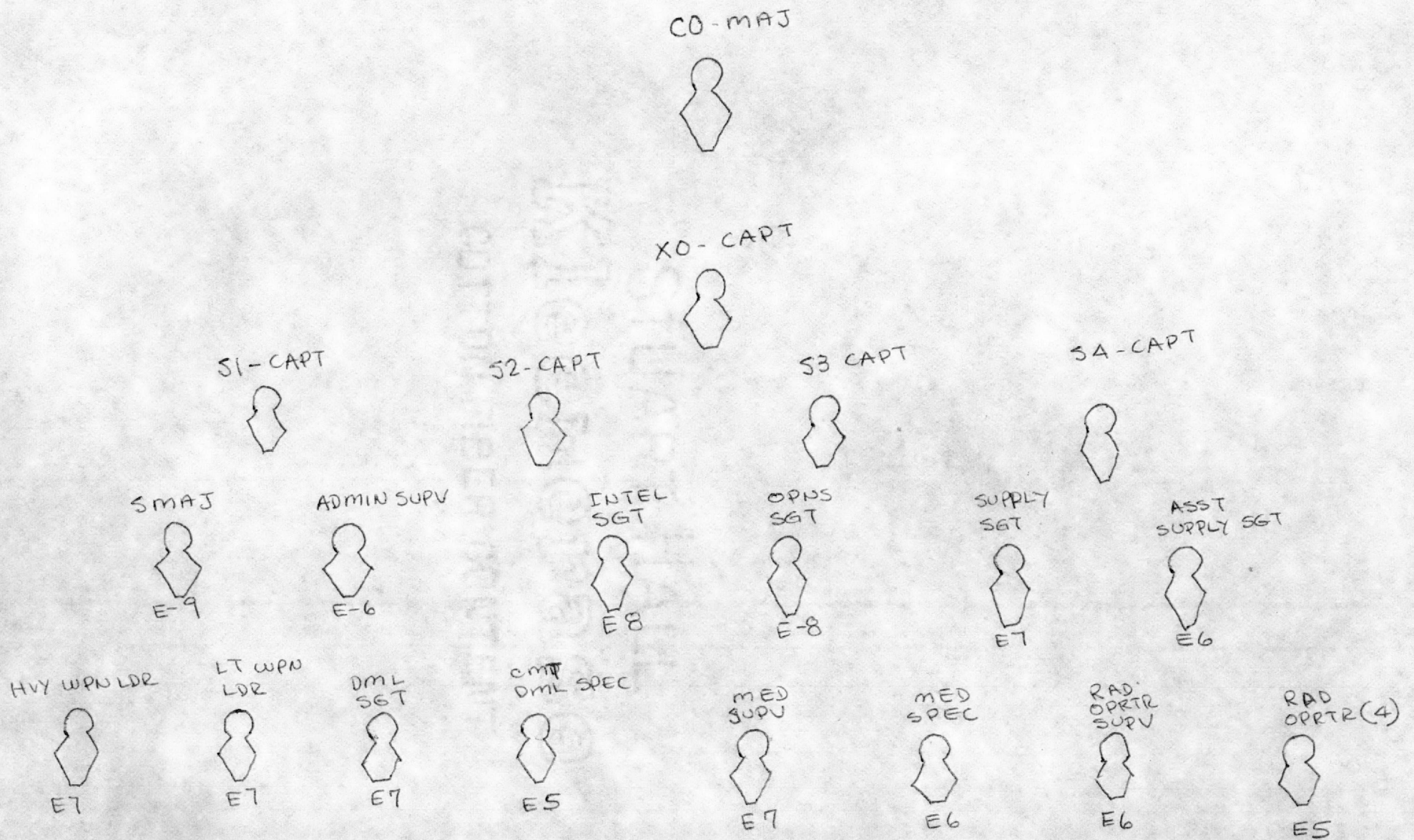
RAD
RPMN



E4

C DETACHMENT

FIG 3



B DETACHMENT
FIG 4

CO CAPT



XO LT



OPNS SGT



E-8

INTEL SGT



E-7

LT WPNS
LDR



E-7

HVY WPNS
LDR



E-7

DML SGT



E-6

CMBT DML
SPEC



E-5

MED
SPEC



E-7

ASST
MED
SPEC



E-6

RADIO
SUPV



E-6

RADIO
OPRTR



E-5

A DETACHMENT
FIG 5

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(Department of the Army, Sept 1961)
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Captain Rafael G. Guirau, 05826171, Infantry, was commissioned in 1959 from The University of Puerto Rico. He graduated from the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Ranger, and Airborne School in 1960. He was then assigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In 1960 he graduated from the Special Forces Officer Course and was assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group, Okinawa, from where he had two tours to Vietnam. In 1964 he returned to CONUS and attended the Armor Officer Career Course. He is currently assigned to the US Army Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

US ARMY ARMOR SCHOOL
Fort Knox, Kentucky

28 September 1964

SUBJECT: Submission of "Article for Publication"

TO: Director, General Subjects Department
ATTN: Effective Writing Instructor
US Army Armor School
Fort Knox, Kentucky

1. In accordance with paragraph 1, annex A to supplemental material, "Orientation on Writing Projects," enclosed is my article for publication.
2. In the preparation of my article, I have followed requirements as outlined in the afore-referenced annex A. Further, I have included a bibliography of all sources that I used in the preparation of my article.
3. My article is submitted to you as a complete article.

Rafael G. Guirau
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Captain, Infantry
A/AOC-1