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UU GMW BAS LCT
POL: DESERTOR
U.S ARMY DESERTOR NOW IN CUBA INSISTS HE WAS CAPTAIN:
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, AUG 15, REUTER -- HUGO ROMEU ALMEIDA WHO DESERTED FROM THE U.S. ARMED FORCES IN GERMANY AND SURFACED IN HAVANA LAST WEEK TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE HERE THAT DESPITE OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT DENIALS, HE HAD HELD THE RANK OF U.S ARMY CAPTAIN AND HAD BEEN A PRACTICING PATHOLOGIST AT THE 8TH GENERAL ARMY HOSPITAL IN STUTTGART FOR TEN MONTHS.

ROMEU (THE ALMEIDA IS A SECOND SURNAME WHICH IS ONLY TO BE USED IN SPANISH TRANSLATIONS) SAID THAT BECAUSE HE REFUSED TO SIGN UP FOR DUTY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AS PART OF A SPECIAL INTER-ARMY RECRUITMENT DRIVE FOR HISPANICS, HE WAS FIRST RESTRICTED TO BASE AND ON LAST JUNE 24TH WAS DEMOTED TO PRIVATE.

FOLLOWING THE CUBAN ANNOUNCEMENT HERE ON AUGUST 11 THAT ROMEU WAS IN CUBA, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DENIED THAT HE HAD EVER BEEN A CAPTAIN AND SAID HE HAD BEEN A PRIVATE WHOSE DUTIES INCLUDED MOPPING FLOORS AT THE STUTTGART HOSPITAL.

THE THIRTY-ONE YEAR OLD, CUBAN BORN, ROMEU, INSISTED THAT HE JOINED THE U.S. ~~ARMY~~ AS A LICENSED PHYSICIAN AND ACCORDING TO CUSTOM WAS GIVEN THE RANK OF CAPTAIN. AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF TRAINING AT FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA, HE SAID, HE WAS SENT TO HIS ONLY OVERSEAS POST, IN STUTTGART.

--MORE/LEM

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+I FUNCTIONED AS A PATHOLOGIST AND PERFORMED THE GREATER PART OF ALL AUTOPSIES IN THE STUTTGART MILITARY AREA BETWEEN JULY 1985 AND MAY 1986, ROMEU SAID. HE SAID THAT HIS DIRECT SUPERVISOR WAS MAJOR LEE JONES AT THE 5TH GENERAL HOSPITAL OF THE U.S. ARMY AND THAT PROOF OF HIS STATUS CAN BE FOUND IN THE MANY AUTOPSY REPORTS AND DEATH CERTIFICATES WHICH HE SIGNED.

THE FORMER U.S. SOLDIER SAID HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE UNITED STATES FROM CUBA IN 1960 WHEN HE WAS FIVE YEARS OF AGE. HE ATTENDED SCHOOL IN EVANSTON, ILLINOIS, STUDIED A LOYOLA ACADEMY AND SPENT A YEAR AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY IN ROME. HE RETURNED TO STUDY PREMED AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY IN CHICAGO, THEN STUDIED AN TAUGHT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ANDFINALLY RECEIVAED HIS MEDICAL DEGREE AT YALE UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK IN JUNE 1980.

ACCORDING TO ROMEU, HE HE DID POST GRADUATE WORK IN PATHOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN BUFFALO AND AT ST. JOSEPHS HOSPITAL IN WISCONSIN. HE COMPLETED, HE SAID, HIS RESIDENCY IN PATHOLOGY AT COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE IN CHICAGO. ROMEU SAID HE TOOK HIS EXAMS IN JANUARY 1980 WHICH PERMITTED HIM TO PRACTICE MEDICINE IN THE UNITED STATES.

ROMEU DECLARED THAT HIS PROLEMS WITH THE ARMY BEGAN IN STUTTGART WHEN HE REFUSED TO BE RECRUITED FOR A PROGRAM THAT WAS AIMED AT SENDING HISPANICS IN THE U.S. ARMY TO CENTRAL AMERICA. HE TOLD THE NEW CONFERENCE THAT +A COLONEL BURGOS, OF SPANISH ORIGIN, WAS THE RECRUTING OFFICER.+

HE TOLD THE PRESS CONFERENCE: +I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANY AGGRESSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA.+

==MORE/LEM