



HEALTH AND FREEDOM
Non-Profit Organization

Miami Medical Team Foundation

FEBRUARY 1991

BULLETIN

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MIAMI MEDICAL TEAM TODAY

"There are men who destroy and others who build"

Jose Marti

The Miami Medical Team is filled with men and women who are gifted with the qualities of being honest, idealistic humanitarians, who are building on the ruins of countries who have suffered oppression. Every day that goes by, we are more and more committed to the health programs we have initiated in Nicaragua.

We are learning from the Nicaraguans so that when Cuba's time arrives, we will be able to deal with the spiritual as well as material needs of a people that have been mistreated by a totalitarian regime for over 30 years. We believe

that the problems we are encountering in Nicaragua today are very similar to the problems we will find in Cuba after Castro's downfall. The experience we are gaining is a basic one to be able to solve the problems of Cuba. We think that it is about time that this abuse of Cuba terminates. We should not permit the physical and psychological abuse to persist much further. We should all look to Continental Solidarity to solve the Cuban tragedy. If all do their part, we will soon be working on the reconstruction of a free and democratic Cuba.



"La Pelona". Advance Hospital and Contra base. December 17, 1987. Cuba flag guarded by Nicaraguan resistance. Dr. Alzugaray (MMT), Dr. Tomas (Medical Chief Resistance), Dr. Soler (MMT), Dr. Gabriel (Resistance), guerrillas.

TRANSPORTING DONATIONS

The Miami Medical Team is composed of two main groups: The central nucleus formed by doctors, nurses, technicians and

logistics supporters. This group is composed of personal that collects, transports and store medical donations. All of this



MIAMI, MARCH 1984

C47 cargo plane donated to transport medications and medical equipment by MMT to the Contras in Honduras.



HONDURAS, MARCH 1984

C47 cargo plane, landing in contra air strip. Unloading donations by Resistance members. Dr. Alzugaray (MMT), Dr. Martinez Campos (Resistance).

work is done on a volunteer basis by men and women who give of their free time after leaving their regular jobs and during the weekends. The warehouses where these donations are stored were donated since our work with the Contras. Organizations helping this project are Joint Command Brigade 2506, The Cuban Air Force in Exile, The Cuban Political Prisoner Organizations, the Miami Havana Lions Club, Miami Managua Lions Club, the Municipalities of Placetas and Pinar del Rio, the American Humanitarian Counsel, the Masons, the American Radio Club, and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Miami Medical Team, etc. Principally, we would like to mention as Head of Logistics Mr. Ricardo Madan, a great fighter for just causes. The coordinator of Trips and Logistics is Mr. Mario Roque de Escobar. The Head of the Warehouse is nurse Lazaro Verdasco and his assistant, Mr. Nelson Rodriguez. For humanitarian reasons, when refugees and Freedom Fighters were out of funds, we organized "Radio Marathons" in the city of Miami with great help from the spanish radio stations (WAQI, WQBA, WRHC, WOCN, WCMQ, Radio Suave, etc.) Donations were picked up, packed and shipped via airplane (DC6 or C47) to Honduras where they were handed over to the Medical Corps of the Nicaraguan Resistance. A total of six planes were shipped from 1984 to 1986. Medicines, clothes and food were donated until the United States voted to resume aid to the Contras.

(To be continued)

MIAMI MEDICAL TEAM

WHY I WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE CONTRAS

By Dr. Mario A. Soler, Orthopedic Surgeon

One day as I was visiting the Orthopedic ward at Coral Gables Hospital, Dr. Manuel Alzugaray approached me and asked me if I would be willing to help him as an Orthopedic Surgeon in going to

Alzugaray my word and he is a very humane man in addition to being my very good friend. I could not back down at that moment because he needed my help.

Dr. Alzugaray has very good leadership qualities, and that is why it was very easy for me to follow him.

We departed on April 24, 1987 and returned on the 26th. The trip lasted three days.

During this trip, I was faced with the harsh realities of life that I, for one, was not used to seeing due to the leisurely lifestyle that one has in the United States of America when one compares it to the lives of these poor people.

It was there that I learned to see the value

of a human life and the frailty of it as well. It was there that I was truly able to experience sincere appreciation. It was the type of appreciation and respect that a patient shows towards his doctor.

These days were days of intense work, intense surgery, patient visits, external examinations and the like. There was hardly any time to eat or bathe. We slept no more than 3 or 4 hours per night. We ate what was available, and the majority of the time, we were not able to bathe.

It was there that I encountered the most difficult and complicated cases I had ever seen in my Orthopedic practice.

I should mention that these surgeries were performed with a rather scanty supply of equipment and

medical supplies. Oftentimes, we were forced to operate without the use of an X-ray machine to determine any preliminary fractures.

I would, however, like to mention in all honesty and thanks to God, that all these surgeries turned out well. God was with us.

During the trip, we operated between the both of us 15-20 patients in addition to consultations and examinations.

Let me mention the fact that during the first few hours, I was working with the mentality of the American doctor, and I had the word "lawsuit" in the back of my mind.

However, this quickly dissipated as I saw the goodness and appreciation of these patients who had been injured in combat. These were combatants in the fight for liberty and democracy. These were combatants against Communism.

These were the Contras, "Freedom Fighters". The majority were farmers, and almost all of them were children. I would like to mention that it was there in that hospital on the border, "El Aguacate", that I gained the motivation and human drive to continue with MMT.

The warmth and appreciation was so immense and sincere and from such humble people that I felt blessed by God. It was then that I gave Dr. Alzugaray my sincere thanks for having asked me to accompany him. At that moment the virus had already grabbed hold of me, and I asked him: When do I have to return?

After that first trip, I made a total of 13-14 trips to the mountains of Honduras. I took one trip to Angola in July of 1988.

After the downfall of the Sandinista Communist regime in the elections and thanks to the "Freedom Fighters", the Contras, I have taken 5 trips to free Nicaragua where we have continued our deed, medical and humanitarian, with the people of Nicaragua and the Contras.

NOW, WE HAVE OUR TRIP, THE UNREALIZED GOAL: CUBA, "GOD HELP US"



Humanitarian air bridge, Miami-Honduras. From 1984-1986, MMT to Nica Resistance. Mr. Ricardo Madan (chief logistics MMT) loading a plane with a fork lift.

operate on the wounded Contras in the Honduras-Nicaraguan border. This occurred towards the end of November of 1986.

I already knew of Dr. Alzugaray's medical and humanitarian deeds and I told him I would let him know.

Towards the end of that same year and after thinking it through, and discussing it with my family, I told him that I would help him.

It was impossible for me to go in January. So, we made arrangements to go in April of 1987. It was a three day trip.

When the moment did arrive, I would be lying to you if I didn't say that I was somewhat nervous and worried.

At the time, I still did not have the motivation needed to embark on those trips. However, I had given Dr.

MIAMI MEDICAL TEAM AND AFFILIATES

We'd like to take this opportunity to mention the different groups that have organized themselves in other cities to collaborate with the effort of the Miami Medical Team. On January 13, 1991, a representative group of the Miami Medical Team visited Tampa, where we met in the Cuban Civic Club with group of doctors and

representatives of the organizations. In this reunion, we were accompanied by our Chaplain, Father Manuel Rodriguez. There, we established our Tampa affiliates headed by doctors Francisco Hernandez, Osberto Fernandez, Maria Rosario Gomez, Carolina Sierra and Julia Junco Marante.

We would also like to mention our affiliates in Port Charlotte, Florida, with doctors Luis Serentil, Miguel Morales, Marcos Lara, Jacinto Oliver, Omar Perez and nurse Juan Acosta. We would also like to mention the participation of Dr. Eduardo Otero in the affiliates of Houston, Texas. We would like to reorganize our affiliates in New Jersey-New York with Elo Hernandez as well as our affiliates in California as our next project.

MIAMI MEDICAL TEAM NEWS

● There was an abundant donation of toys from The Latin Builder's Association through journalist Benito Alonso Artigas. At the same time, another donation of toys was made by the Ladies Auxilliary of AGUE headed by Mrs. Mirta Zoa Rodriguez. In addition, 1200 lbs. of children's clothes was donated by the Ladies Auxilliary of MMT under the direction of Mrs. Marta Soler and Mrs. Conchita Alzugaray. The shipment with more than 1750 pounds was shipped on Aeronica Airlines and the contents of the shipment was delivered to the most needy areas in Nicaragua.

● The Ladies Auxilliary of the Miami Medical Team enjoyed a breakfast at the home of Mrs. Marta Soler to coordinate the fundraising events to be applied to the different programs of the MMT. On Saturday, March 23, 1991 a concert will be held at the Manuel Artime Theater at 7:30 p.m. The concert will be a tribute to Cuban Music as interpreted by Father Manuel Rodriguez.
RESERVATIONS:
856-7207 and 858-7992

● This past January 26th, Dr. Alzugaray

along with Mr. Nelson Rodriguez met with three Cuban professionals in San Jose, Costa Rica.

These men are Dr. Mario Reyes, Dr. Gilberto Pérez Franco and nurse Josvani Domenigo. These men are members of a Cuban Medical Brigade that has been working in Nicaragua since the time of the Sandinistas. Now they are exiled. These young Cubans were born, raised, and educated under the Castro regime, however they all share the same ideals of independence and liberty that were stepped on in their own homeland. They bring us a message of hope in telling us that the generation they belong to is fed up with the current system. As a result,

they believe that sooner than later, changes will occur in Cuba towards Democracy, and then, we will all be able to work together in the Reconstruction of our Homeland.



SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA. JANUARY 24, 1991

Cuban doctors exiled in Nicaragua two weeks previously. They worked in the Castro's Medical Brigade in Nicaragua. Dr. Mario Reyes Morales (pediatritian), Dr. Manuel Alzugaray (MMT), Josvani Dumenigo (nurse) Nelson Rodriguez (MMT) and Dr. Gilberto Perez Franco (pediatritian).

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