

SECRET

6 July 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 6 July 1982

The Director chaired the meeting. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

Fitzwater reported there was a serious power outage at 2300 on 2 July and that GSA refused to fix the problem until after the holiday. As a result, CIA technicians were called in and they repaired the problem.

[redacted]

25X1

Gates noted he spent most of the weekend attending Crisis Pre-Planning Group meetings. He added that Radio Tel Aviv has broken the news about proposed US-French peacekeeping forces. [redacted]

25X1

Gates initiated a discussion of Judge Clark's memorandum establishing a new SIG on International Economic Policy (SIG-IEP). Gates said that the Director is not listed as a member of the new SIG in the pertinent draft NSDD and suggested that he call Judge Clark to request that he be made a member. The Director agreed to do so. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] said he and the Chief of the Audit Staff will brief a PFIAB Subcommittee this afternoon. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Glerum reported the overseas pay issue has been briefed to the appropriate people and it appears that all problems have been overcome. [redacted]

25X1

Rowen said that former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Neumann is in town and will be meeting with the NIO/NESA. [redacted] suggested the Director might also wish to meet with Ambassador Neumann to discuss the Saudi views on the current Israeli-PLO situation. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

SECRET

In response to the Director's question, neither the DDI nor the DDO have seen publications outlining the whole range of CI operations DIA is involved with, although Stein said the DDO is fully aware of CI operations being run by the DoD. [redacted]

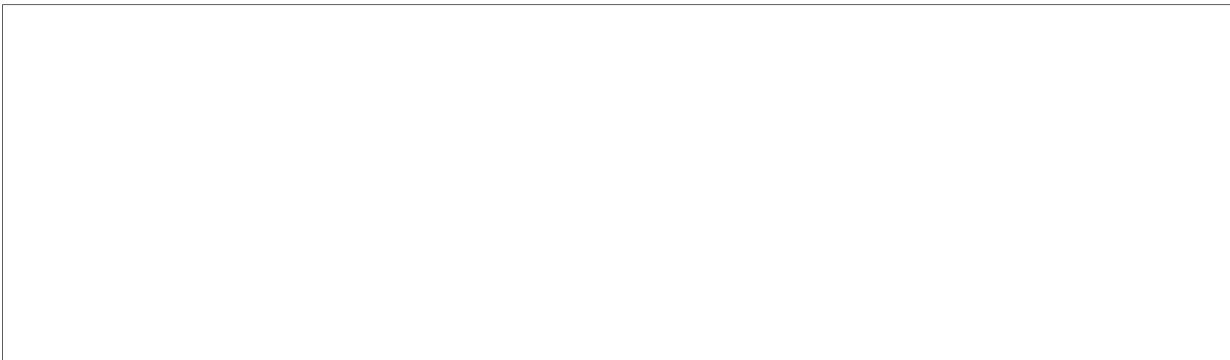
25X1

[redacted] noted the Taubman article in the 4 July Sunday New York Times Magazine (attached). Article indicates new indictments are expected in the Wilson/Terpil case. Sporkin discussed what he knew of this. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1



Attachment

SECRET

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 18NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE
4 JULY 1982

The Secret World Of a Green Beret

By Philip Taubman

The first call came on a muggy July evening in 1977. Luke Thompson, a master sergeant in the Army Special Forces, was at home in Fayetteville, N.C. The caller identified himself as Pat Loomis from Washington and asked if Thompson might be interested in recruiting a team of former Green Berets for an overseas mission that would pay well. Loomis provided no other information. Thompson conditionally accepted the proposal, not knowing that he was about to become involved in one of the strangest and most disturbing operations in the annals of international espionage.

When the conversation with Loomis ended, Thompson, who says he was initially concerned that the offer might be a trap by a hostile foreign intelligence service, phoned military intelligence officers at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, headquarters of the Special Forces, to report the call and to seek their guidance. Two officers drove to his house, according to Thompson, and the three men spent the evening discussing the operation.

The next day, Loomis called again and told Thompson he wanted to arrange a meeting the following day in Fayetteville. They agreed to meet at the Sheraton Motor Inn. The day of the meeting, Thompson recalls, he was informed by the military intelligence officers that they had checked the offer "to the top" and found it was "legal and aboveboard." They told him, "You can pursue it as you desire," he says. Later, at the Sheraton, Loomis identified himself as a covert agent for the Central Intelligence Agency. Less than a week later, Thompson — who had been granted a leave by his commanding officers — and three former Green Berets he had recruited were in Libya. Their mission: to train terrorists.

Philip Taubman, a Washington correspondent for The New York Times, frequently reports on intelligence matters.

Five years later, the Libyan operation remains a subject of mystery, controversy and investigation. The organizers of the mission, Edwin P. Wilson and Frank E. Terpil, both former American intelligence agents, were indicted by a Federal grand jury in 1980 on charges of illegally shipping explosives to Libya as part of the terrorist training operation. Wilson was recently caught in an international trap set by the Justice Department and he is now being held in the Washington area pending trial, with bail set at \$20 million. Terpil remains a fugitive, at last report living in Beirut. Shortly before his meeting with Thompson, Pat Loomis had been dismissed by the C.I.A. for helping Wilson; but because of administrative procedures Loomis was still on the agency's payroll when he contacted Thompson. The Central Intelligence Agency has repeatedly denied authorizing or supporting the operation, but some sources suggest that senior agency officials who were close to Wilson may have given approval to the Libyan scheme, perhaps in the hope it would produce valuable intelligence information on Libyan terrorism. There is also a possibility, which Federal prosecutors are exploring, that the same senior C.I.A. officials might have been silent business partners of Wilson. Federal prosecutors in Washington, Houston, Denver and several other cities are still investigating various aspects of the case and additional indictments are said to be likely this year.

Of the many riddles that arise from these events, one of the most difficult to solve may be this: Why did a group of former Green Berets, men who were trained to be America's elite commando troops and who consider themselves unwavering American patriots, accept an offer to train terrorists for a hostile foreign government? The men themselves say the

reasons are not hard to comprehend. The money was good (they say they were promised \$6,500 a month), the action was appealing and, at least as important, they claim that they were firmly convinced that they were enlisting in an officially sanctioned American mission to infiltrate the Libyan intelligence apparatus. But was there something about these men, the training they had received and the tasks they had carried out in the past that discouraged them from questioning what was clearly a questionable mission? Had they become so accustomed to accepting unsavory assignments from shadowy sources of authority that they saw nothing unusual or suspicious in being sent by the United States Government to aid an anti-American dictator? And was there something about the organization of the American intelligence system, particularly the relationship between the C.I.A. and the Green Berets, that encouraged agents to operate without clear lines of authority?

Since the mid-1970's, the nation has known that the Government has conducted questionable operations overseas, including assassinations. But the country never got to know any of the men who carried them out, the details of what they did or the impact their work had on them. Most of the missions were highly classified and the men were instructed never to discuss them. Luke Thompson, now retired and disillusioned, decided to break that silence. This is the story of his experiences, a story which opens a window into the Byzantine, rarely viewed world of modern espionage. It is also a story which reduces certain governmental policies to a human scale on which the costs — for individuals and society — can be better fathomed.

Not all of what Thompson claims can be checked against other sources of information. The Government re-

CONTINUED

fuses to discuss some of the missions he describes. And his thoughts and emotions are clearly his alone. But most aspects of his story, including the incidents involving larger units of Green Berets, were witnessed by others and many were recorded in Government files. These sources, including current and former Defense Department officials, former intelligence officials and published and unpublished Government records, confirm that his account is solidly grounded in fact.

For the years that he wore a green beret, from 1962 to 1978, Thompson inhabited the dark corners of what might have been a Graham Greene novel. He was part of a secret American army of covert agents who handled the dirty work of United States foreign policy — often under the supervision of the C.I.A. — all over the world. For example, Thompson says he took part in a previously undisclosed assassination plot in the Dominican Republic in 1965. He claims his colleagues later went to Bolivia where they helped Government soldiers hunt down and assassinate Ernesto Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary leader. In Southeast Asia, Thompson says he and his fellow Green Berets assassinated province chiefs, businessmen and political leaders suspected of being Vietcong sympathizers, made reconnaissance missions into North Vietnam and carried out secret attacks in Cambodia months before the formal American incursion in 1970.

His story raises questions that may be difficult for the nation to answer. Among them: How does one measure the costs to a free and lawful society of sending citizens to assassinate foreign political leaders just because they happen to be troublesome? Is there not a line between unconventional warfare and unacceptable warfare? Can men be trained as elite, obedient commandos without destroying their ability to make independent judgments when necessary? And what responsibility does the Government bear to help such men readjust to civilian life?

Luke Floyd Thompson was born on March 13, 1934, in Lewis County, Kentucky, the seventh of 15 children; four of his siblings died in infancy. The area was so rural, he says, that his home was located in no specific town. His father, Meredith, was a steelworker. His

mother, Verna Gillum, was a full-time mother and housewife. When Luke was 3, the Ohio River overflowed its banks and washed away the Thompsons' house. The family moved to Ashland, where his father, unable to find a mill job, went to work for the W.P.A.

The military was always an important part of the Thompson family. Luke's father served in the cavalry in France during World War I. His six brothers all enlisted in the military when they became old enough, and four of them saw action during World War II. Luke joined the National Guard when he was 14 and enlisted in the Army three years later.

Thompson was an "unruly" youngster, as he puts it. He recalls taking part in the robbery of a bootlegger in Kentucky. "We went into the Red Bud Tavern, shot up the jukebox with a .45, and robbed the guy of \$75. We had to park our getaway car on a hill 'cause that was the only way it would start." An encounter with the police the next day convinced Luke that he was finished with what he calls "the gangster business."

In 1955, however, he "started becoming delinquent again," he says. This time, that delinquency took the form of going absent without leave and other violations of military regulations. Thompson was eventually brought up before a court martial hearing in 1956 and given a dishonorable discharge as well as a year at Fort Leavenworth Prison in Kansas. He was told, however, that he could restore himself to active duty if he served the time with good behavior. Even so, it took Thompson several years after his release from prison to persuade the Army to waive his dishonorable discharge and permit him to re-enlist, which he did in 1959.

At the time Thompson was admitted to Special Forces training in 1959, the Green Berets were still a small, relatively untested group, established by the Army in 1952 to provide the United States with a unit capable of conducting unconventional warfare operations, including commando and intelligence activities. They accepted for training only seasoned soldiers prepared to endure several years of additional highly specialized and intense training, followed by a career on the cutting edge of American military activities around the world.

In the late 1950's, the C.I.A. began turning to the Special Forces to provide manpower for covert operations around the world. The relationship between the agency and the Green Berets flourished in Southeast Asia during the 1960's and 1970's, according to Defense Department officials,

as hundreds of Special Forces troops served in operations supervised by the C.I.A. Such cooperation has continued, intelligence officials acknowledge: Before the unsuccessful hostage rescue mission in Iran in 1980, a number of Green Berets based in West Germany entered Teheran posing as German businessmen to help with rescue preparations.

Part of the mystique of the Green Berets has always derived from their training program. More than half the men who take the rigorous course either do not finish or are not considered qualified at the end for induction into the Special Forces. Skill at killing is required of all Green Berets and Thompson apparently learned his lessons well. "There are only two ways to die," he says matter-of-factly. "If you stop breathing or your heart stops pumping blood. Everything else is a practical application."

After being inducted into the Special Forces, Thompson was selected to attend intelligence school, one of several areas in which Green Berets may specialize. But when he found out there would be a six-week delay before classes started, he opted for a specialty in medical training instead. At first, he recalls, he thought "all medics were conscientious objectors or queers," but as time passed, Thompson became intoxicated with the healing arts.

After completing the initial phases of medical training in 1961, Thompson joined the Seventh Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg. He was immediately assigned to an A Team (the basic Special Forces unit, composed of 12 men) which was sent to Vietnam to train civilian irregular forces to fight the Vietcong.

Thompson's next major assignment came in early April 1965. At that time, he says, he was selected to serve on a covert team sent to the Dominican Republic, where Col. Francisco Caamaño Deñó, was leading guerrilla forces in an attempt to overthrow the Government. The United States, in that period, was ostensibly taking a neutral position in the Dominican civil war. In late April, however, when violence escalated and the rebels appeared to be near seizing power, President Johnson sent in the Marines, claiming that American lives were in danger. The Marines helped prevent a left-wing takeover.

Whether Thompson's secret mission was organized by the C.I.A. is unclear. Some former agency officials who asked not to be named said such an operation did take place. Other retired C.I.A. officials who were in-

CONTINUED

volved in the Dominican Republic at the time denied that the operation was managed by the agency. Thompson says it began when a team of Green Berets was sent to the island only to monitor the activities of American civilians, including Peace Corps workers, to help assure their safety. When the Green Berets came upon evidence that some of the Americans were assisting guerrilla forces, however, their major objective shifted from protecting their fellow countrymen to spying on them.

The surveillance mission was abruptly cut short when Thompson and his colleagues were given orders to link up with a team of United States Navy unconventional-warfare specialists and develop a plan to assassinate Caamaño, he says. The joint team decided to attack Caamaño at a building in Santa Domingo where he often met with other guerrilla leaders. They would approach from the beach down two parallel streets and carry explosives into the building by hand. After laying the charges, the Americans were supposed to fight their way back out, carrying any casualties with them to avoid detection of American participation. At the last minute, he says, the mission was cancelled. No reason was ever provided. Former intelligence officials now say the plan was considered too risky and might have harmed rather than helped American interests by making Caamaño a martyr.

Thompson never returned to Latin America, but he reported that two years later several of his fellow Green Berets secretly took part in the capture and killing of Che Guevara. Thompson's description of the operation in Bolivia was confirmed by another former Green Beret who was a participant, and by former Defense Department and intelligence officials who were involved. All of them asked not to be identified.

According to these accounts, a team of 10 to 12 Green Berets from the Eighth Special Forces Group based in Panama was sent to Bolivia in late 1967 as part of a C.I.A.-sponsored plan to train Bolivian forces in counterinsurgency techniques and to help the Bolivians stalk Guevara. In a camp located at the outskirts of La Paz, the Americans worked with 100 to 150 Bolivian special-forces troops. During the training program, Bolivian intelligence agents reported that Guevara was in the mountains east of La Paz. The Green Berets, according to a participant, conducted their own intelligence check and confirmed Guevara's presence.

The next step was to formulate a plan to capture him. The bulk of this preparation was handled by the Americans, and over the course of several weeks a small team of Bolivians was specially selected and trained for the operation. In the end, the capture was relatively straightforward, with the Bolivians and their American advisers tracking down Guevara in a remote mountain village where he was training guerrillas. "He was caught and executed on the spot," said a former Green Beret who was there. "The Bolivians pulled the trigger. They needed to get the credit." Guevara's body was brought back to the camp, where it was identified by two American intelligence agents who had flown in from Panama.

Following the aborted assassination scheme in the Dominican Republic, the focus of Thompson's career shifted back to Southeast Asia. He returned to Vietnam for the first of several tours of duty there and in Thailand, with frequent missions into Laos, Cambodia and even North Vietnam.

Thompson says the purpose of the missions into North Vietnam was to collect strategic intelligence. He says he went on four such missions himself, and knew of dozens of others. Former Defense Department officials say such missions involving Americans were made during the early years of the Vietnam War but were reduced and eventually ended by 1967-68. After that, they say, infiltration into North Vietnam was handled by mercenary forces and was restricted primarily to border areas.

Next, Thompson was ordered to join a covert operation in Thailand run by the Army and the C.I.A. Supervised by the MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam-Special Operations Group), the mission involved the training of Thai special-forces teams, followed by their deployment with Green Berets to interdict the Ho Chi Minh trail.

It was during this tour in Southeast Asia that assassinations became almost routine for Thompson. He still remembers the first vividly. "The man was a Vietnamese interpreter. It was proved to the satisfaction of our intelligence sergeant that he was supplying information to the Vietcong. I was told, 'This one's yours.'" A week later Thompson and the interpreter were sent on an operation together. "We came into contact with the Vietcong. As soon as we hit the ground, he

got wiped out. He was a few feet away. When the shooting started, I put a burst in him. He never knew it."

Although Thompson knew the man and hadn't considered him an enemy, he didn't dwell on the assassination. "It was a mechanical thing," he says. "It had to be done. It was a chore just like brushing your teeth." Whenever possible, he says, the Green Berets would try to disguise their involvement and make it seem as if the killing had been done by the Vietcong or either of the Vietnamese armies. "You try to isolate the subject from anyone or any situation that might lead back to the true source of his death by using 'sniper,' 'a firefight,' or 'explosive device.' There are no words. Just bang. You're not a tribunal. You're just a machine."

Thompson says that assassination targets included anyone considered a Vietcong supporter or sympathizer. The list included civilians such as district chiefs, businessmen and political leaders. Former Green Berets and Defense Department officials confirm that such assassinations were common. "We had the most basic law: survival," Thompson says. "When it became obvious that someone was a threat to our efforts, it was just a job. On reflection, it's not something that I'm proud of . . . I hope I didn't kill innocent people."

Thompson says he was troubled by a killing only once. It was in combat. He recalled the moment: "It was a straightforward case of kill or be killed. I was walking along a trail in textbook style, alert for anything. Suddenly, someone stepped around a bend in the trail with his weapon on his shoulder. I killed him. Immediately after, it was the greatest thrill in the world — I guess because I was alive — but as the day wore on, I was moved to distraction thinking about this guy. He seemed more like a friend. He was doing exactly what he was told to do, and we had come into conflict and I had beat him. I didn't have any sense of victory. Here's this Joe Gook walking along and I'm G.I. Joe. I didn't know his name. He was a soul in the jungle, I was a soul in the jungle. I had an affinity for the guy. This was probably the worst any killing's dwelled on me."

During the same period that Thompson, in the jargon of the Green Berets, was "greasing" suspected Vietcong, he was also busy tending to wounded and sick Americans and Vietnamese, including Vietcong forces. The contradiction never troubled Thompson. "I'd go from curing to killing," he said. "I'd take off my

CONTINUED

scrub suit and put on my camouflage fatigues and move out. I had no problem making the transition."

Thompson says he treated anyone who came to his field clinic. "I had to maintain a neutral posture. I might've treated a bunch of people who killed my buddies but I had to help gain the good will of the local population. That's money in the bank for everyone on the team."

Thompson's career in Southeast Asia concluded with missions that took him into Malaysia and Cambodia. In late 1967, after serving briefly as a medical instructor back at Fort Bragg, he was sent to Thailand, where he faced his biggest crisis as a medic: an epidemic of typhoid fever. He said that his primitive clinic had six beds to handle more than 170 patients suffering from the disease. Thompson lost only a dozen patients, a far lower mortality rate than for other medics in the area, and he received commendations from the Army Surgeon General's office equating his efforts with the feats of Walter Reed, the famous Army surgeon. He showed me copies of the commendations.

Thompson's penultimate tour began in January 1968, when he was assigned to a mobile strike force conducting search-and-destroy missions along the Vietnam-Cambodia border. Thompson says that the Green Berets commanded three battalions of mercenary troops composed primarily of Cambodians. "We were in and out of Cambodia all the time," he says. These raids into Cambodia took place two years before President Nixon announced that American and South Vietnamese forces were moving into Cambodia to attack North Vietnamese command headquarters and military stockpiles.

Smaller raids, which Thompson and other former Green Berets say began in 1967, also predated the secret American bombing of Cambodia begun by the Nixon Administration in 1969. Thompson says that he and his colleagues were told the operations in Cambodia were highly classified and that they were instructed not to discuss them with anyone. The British journalist William Shawcross described the operations in "Sideshow," his book about the secret American war in Cambodia.

Thompson's final assignment in Southeast Asia took place in 1972, when he was sent to Thailand to train mercenaries for operations in Laos.

The training program, he says, was run by the C.I.A. Former intelligence officials confirmed that such an operation was mounted in Thailand at the time, but said they did not know whether Thompson was involved.

By the time Thompson left Southeast Asia for the last time, late in 1972, he was exhausted and more than a little bitter. "I could have been a killer when I got out," he says. "I would just walk up to a man and swing at him. Long hair, anything would set me off. If the U.S. decided to have a civil war, I would have fought on either side, as long as Jane Fonda and George McGovern were on the other side."

Fortunately, Thompson says, "I had time to straighten out my head." During a leave in Japan after his last mission in Vietnam, Thompson married a Japanese tour guide he had met at Expo '70 in Osaka. The Thompsons spent several months at a Special Forces base in Okinawa before going to Fort Bragg. The marriage and the interval in Okinawa gave him time, he says, to shed some of the violent instincts he had developed.

From 1972 to 1977, Thompson spent most of his time on training missions in the United States. Twice during those years, he traveled to Taiwan to help train Taiwanese special forces, and he spent several weeks in Zaire helping to train commando forces there. None of these operations, he says, were clandestine.

Throughout all of this, Thompson remained an obedient soldier. "I personally can't say that the Government ever asked me to do something improper," he says. "Maybe you or others would consider it wrong, but I think I've never been asked to do something wrong by my superiors."

The man who, in the summer of 1977, proposed that Thompson recruit a team of former Green Berets to train Libyan commando troops was Patry E. Loomis, a former Green Beret himself and a covert agent for the C.I.A., according to Federal investigators and former intelligence officials who again declined to be named. He described the work when he talked to Thompson but he did not reveal that he had been dismissed several weeks earlier because he had assisted the former agents Wilson and Terpil in obtaining explosive timers for shipment to Libya. Wilson and Terpil, it was later discovered, had signed an agreement with Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi to help train terrorists. Wilson had served for 20 years as a covert agent for the C.I.A.

and for a secret naval intelligence group called Task Force 157. He left Government employment in 1976, the same year he and Terpil reached their agreement with Libya. Terpil worked as a communications technician for the C.I.A. before he was forced to resign in 1971 following various violations of C.I.A. regulations. He went on to become an international arms salesman and a key supplier of military equipment to the then Uganda strongman Idi Amin.

Thompson's assumption that the Libyan operation was legitimate was partly conditioned by his background. Other Green Berets, including Thompson's commanding officer at the time, told me that the operation was no more bizarre than many they knew about which were sanctioned by the intelligence agency. The go-ahead Thompson says he received from military intelligence officials also alleviated his doubts. How military intelligence officials got the impression that the operation was approved by the Government remains one of the major unresolved mysteries of the affair. Thompson is unable to recall the names of the two men who he says came to his home after Loomis first called. Two other Army intelligence officers at Fort Bragg gave contradictory accounts of what happened in interviews and were unable to recall the specific steps they took after Thompson first notified military intelligence following the call from Loomis. The two men declined to be named. A third figure, Carl H. Oelschig, who was a senior intelligence officer at Special Forces headquarters in 1977, said in an interview that he first learned about the Libyan operation only after Thompson returned from Libya. "I almost fell out of my chair when Luke told me what he had been doing," he recalled.

Oelschig said he instructed Thompson to report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and talk to other military intelligence officers at Fort Bragg. Meanwhile, Oelschig informed his superiors and recommended that a check be run through a more senior intelligence unit stationed at Fort Meade, Md. He said he never learned what results, if any, were sent back to Fort Bragg. "I carried it as far as I could," he said, "and assumed it was being handled correctly." Federal investigators be-

CONTINUED

lieve that senior officials at the C.I.A. who worked closely with Wilson while he was at the agency may have intercepted the inquiries from Fort Bragg. Others speculate that Wilson, who had friends at the Defense Department, might have somehow been able to get them to reach into the military intelligence system and persuade key officials that the Libyan operation was sanctioned. Finally, there is the possibility that Thompson, in an effort to justify his actions, did not get the approval he claims he received. He says, however, that he is certain about these recollections.

Another still-murky question is why Thompson's superiors at Fort Bragg granted him a leave of absence. Thompson assumed his request for a leave was approved because his commanding officers had received orders from their superiors in Washington to allow him to participate in the Libyan mission. The record, however, is not clear. Col. Robert A. Mountel, who was Thompson's commanding officer at the time, says he never received orders from anyone about the Libyan operation. He says that Thompson's leave was approved because Green Beret officers thought Thompson wanted to check out a possible civilian job opportunity.

Others say that it was fairly common for veteran Green Beret troops to receive leaves so they could participate in official — and unofficial — overseas missions. Some Federal investigators suggest that senior Special Forces officers permitted Thompson to go to Libya, even though they did not know whether the operation had Government approval, because they thought it might develop into a productive intelligence venture. If so, they overstepped their authority, Army officials say. Intelligence operations involving the Green Berets are supposed to be cleared and approved by senior Pentagon officials with formal orders issued by the staff of the Joint Chiefs and passed down through the Army chain of command to Special Forces commanders. No such orders were issued in the Thompson case, according to Army officials.

Whatever the explanation, any doubts that Thompson may have had vanished when he and three recruits who accompanied him met Wilson in the international zone of the Zurich airport in August 1977 to receive final instructions. "Ed Wilson is the most remarkable man I've ever met," Thompson says. "Professionalism came out of every pore . . . He was aces."

According to Thompson, Wilson told the men that, once in Libya, they should make themselves "indispensable," that they should do nothing that would endanger United States security and that they would receive the best hospital care in the world should they be injured. He closed by adding that he would kill them if they double-crossed him, just as he would expect them to kill him if he backed out of the deal.

Thompson and the other former Green Berets flew on to the Libyan capital of Tripoli carrying with them small arms and other military equipment in a 400-pound locker, plus several bags

filled with technical manuals and blueprints of advanced electronic equipment. Following an initial round of meetings with Libyan colleagues, the Americans were taken to a palace outside Tripoli where they were shown an explosives laboratory. A group of American ordnance experts, most of them military veterans who had been recruited by Wilson's associates, were already there, instructing Libyans how to manufacture terrorist bombs, according to Thompson. At this point, he recalls becoming troubled by the direct link with terrorism.

After several weeks of training Libyan forces in commando tactics, Thompson says he decided he could not adjust to working in Libya's terrorist organization. Claiming that he needed to return to the United States for personal reasons, Thompson was issued a ticket to Fort Bragg via London and Washington. Back home, he reported to military intelligence officials, apparently including Oelschig, and was told to talk to the F.B.I., which by then had begun investigating the Libyan operation.

Despite middle-of-the-night phone calls threatening his safety if he cooperated with Federal prosecutors, Thompson did testify before a grand jury and, as a result, was not indicted. But it quickly became clear to him that his military career was at an

end. In July 1978, he retired from the Green Berets. He says no Green Beret representative has contacted him since.

The transition to civilian life has not been easy. In 1978, Thompson moved to Hawaii in search of solitude and an escape from the turmoil that followed the Libyan mission. For three years, he worked as a safety officer on oil rigs off the coast of Newfoundland and in the Gulf of Mexico, commuting for the two-week shifts from Hawaii. Thompson quit that job last December after relations with the company soured in the wake of publicity about his involvement in Libya. He is now training to become a registered nurse, working the night shift at a hospital in Honolulu. His wife and three children, ages 5, 7 and 9, have made friends and settled into their neighborhood. Thompson says he has not. "I don't have any friends," he once told me. "You're the first person I've confided in."

Almost every day, he retreats to his sailboat. Its Japanese name is *Sayochidori*, which Thompson translates as "Nightbird." With no formal training in sailing but lots of self-taught skill, he navigates around Kaneohe Bay, reefing the sails when the trade winds become brisk or rain squalls blow in from the Pacific. "I know I'm running away from something, or to something," he says of his time on the boat. "I'm transported. If you asked me, though, it would be difficult for me to tell you what I think about." ■