

form of punishment reenforces the belief that there is nothing to be gained by participating in overseas military adventures. Troop morale has been reported low due to a number of factors, including danger, boredom, illness, lack of female companionship and even a higher than normal incidence of homosexuality.⁵

Over 200,000 Cuban soldiers, according to statements made by Fidel Castro in 1985, had already served in Angola. Possibly as many as 50 percent of these men have been blacks or mulattoes. In fact, there is some evidence that points out to the ability of the Ministry of the Armed Forces to have selected a large number of blacks from the Eastern, Western and Central armies in Cuba and their ready reserve organizations to serve in both Angola and Ethiopia in the late 1970's. Although the Cuban population has "darkened" over the past 27 years with the emigration of about 700,000 whites the percentage of blacks in the African wars seems to have been well above their representation in Cuban society. Although this may have been done in order to foster better relations with the native population in Africa, it has also resulted in Cuban blacks taking a higher number of casualties.

Regular military units remained in Cuba to defend the island against possible attack and to train more reservists and paramilitary troops. With the exception of the officer corps, most of the enlisted men who have fought in Angola have been reservists. Over the past ten years, MINFAR has been able to develop an efficient troop rotation system which has served to provide combat experience to many members of the Armed Forces. Although since mid 1976 most of the troops who have served in Angola have acted as garrison troops to free local forces to fight the counterinsurgency operation against UNITA, many Cuban officers and special troops have taken direct part in the war.

Military Organization in Angola

The organization of the Cuban combat troops seems to be very different from that of the units stationed on the island. For example, company strength of units in Cuba is reported to be around 100 men. In Angola Cuban forces operate with full company strength, reported to be about 220 men. Battalions

⁵ The fact that a group of military officers were court-martialed after their questionable performance in Grenada in 1983, demoted and sent to Angola as punishment for their sins, serves to reenforce the idea that there is nothing to be gained by participating in the war. The rhetoric of the leadership is far from the reality faced by the servicemen and the veterans.