9:47 de diciembre de 1981 microscopy, los acontecimientos que ocurren que muchas condenas injustas, cuenta en el porvenir, en el olvido, en la historia, en la memoria. La historia, injusta e inhumana, donde por lo menos se callarán, cada minuto más uno, como prometía, y más de 40 jornaleros, quienes se ganaron el pan de cada día se encontraban en el mismo lugar y todos corrieron la misma suerte...
GUATEMALA

The massacre at Dos Rs, El Petén
In July 1994, at the request of a local human rights organization, FAMDEGUA (Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos de Guatemala), and with the support of the Legal Office of The Archbishopric of Guatemala, members of the EAAF conducted a preliminary investigation in El Petén. The investigation centered on the village of Dos Rs, La Libertad, in the Department of El Petén.

Dos RR was one of the many villages and cooperatives founded by poor peasants from other areas of Guatemala who, in response to a government campaign intended to populate the Petén region, moved to the area during the 1960s and 1970s. On December 8, 1982, during the administration of General Ríos Montt, the Guatemalan Army reportedly entered Dos Rs. According to witnesses, Army troops accused the population of collaborating with the local guerrilla movement, and killed approximately 500 men, women and children. Many of the corpses were allegedly thrown into the village well; while others were left lying in the nearby woods. The Army then burned Dos Rs to the ground, and slaughtered the village livestock.

The purpose of EAAF's 1994 and 1995 missions to El Petén was to investigate this alleged massacre.

Background
More people have been forcibly disappeared in Guatemala during the past four decades than in any other Latin American country. Since 1960, when Guatemala's internal conflict began, approximately 45,000 disappearances have been reported in a country with a current population of ten million. The majority of these persons "disappeared" from peasant villages between 1978 and 1986, during counterinsurgency campaigns against guerrillas groups conducted by the military governments of Gen. Lucas García (1978-1982), Gen. Ríos Montt (1982-1983) and Gen. Mejía Víctores (1983-1986).

These disappearances were intended to eliminate any support the guerrillas might have found among the indigenous and ladino peasants, and to suppress all dissent, organized or otherwise. For example: "in the so-called Victory 82 campaign, thousands of Guatemalans in the countryside were murdered, hundred of villages destroyed, and as many as one million internal refugees created." Thousands of Guatemalan emigrated to Mexico or were forcibly relocated by the army to other parts of the country.

The organizations which are allegedly primarily responsible for the killings and disappearances include the Guatemalan Army, para-military groups, and the "civil self-defense patrols" known as PACs (Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil). The PACs were initiated in 1982 by Gen. Ríos Montt's government, which intended to use them to maintain control over the countryside. PACs are organized at the village level throughout Guatemala's rural areas: they consist of villagers obliged to serve, without pay or remuneration, under the command of a local military officer. PAC members are required to patrol their own neighbors, and at times to participate in kidnappings and/or murders. They are typically armed with machetes, sticks, and old rifles provided by the Army. The PACs are an important part of the military's counterinsurgency and intelligence strategy. Men who refused to join them put their lives at risk; they are identified as "subversives," and are sometimes disappeared or murdered. According to the Guatemalan Minister of Defense, in 1993 537,000 villagers served in PACs.

Guatemala has had elected democratic govern-

1. The guerilla groups started fighting against the central government at the beginning of the sixties but they reached the peak of their power and popularity in the late seventies and early eighties.
4. ibid, p. 18-19.
ments since 1986. While the human rights situation has improved during this period, it is still critical. In her 1993 report, U.N. Independent Expert Monica Pinto stated that the government "must require the army to disarm the PAC in zones where the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Judiciary have proved the commission of abuses." In its latest report on Guatemala, Human Rights Watch/Americas states: "The Human Rights Ombudsman repeatedly has called on the army to disarm the abusive civil patrollers. Alarmingly, for example, General Miranda Trejo, (Commander of Military Zone 22 at Playa Grande, in the Department of El Chique), did not consider death threats, illegal detentions, and other violations of law as serious abuses meriting disarming the PACs dismissed the matter by saying that the civil patrols would be dealt in the context of the peace accords..." (Still in 1996), "the patrollers responsible for a growing list of human rights violations remained at large and maintained their status as armed agents of authority accountable only to the army."

In 1990, the Guatemalan government began United Nations-mediated peace negotiations with the URNG (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca), a coalition of guerrilla groups. On June 23, 1994, in Oslo, these parties agreed that a special commission of inquiry would be formed to investigate the human rights violations which had occurred during the 30-year civil war. Since 1994, a United Nations human rights observer mission (MINUGUA) was established in the country, distributing human rights monitors all over Guatemala. [MINUGUA is formed by approximately 400 people coming from 37 countries, from which 220 are civilian human rights workers, 47 are policemen, and 17 are military personnel. There are 120 Guatemalans working for MINUGUA in administrative and logistical support areas.]

On May 6, the government of the current Presidente Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen and the URNG signed an accord on socioeconomic and agrarian issues, clearing away a topic that had been under discussion for over a year.

Peace was finally signed on December 30, 1996, ending 36 years of civil war. On December 16, with the approval of both sides, the Guatemalan National Assembly approved an amnesty law that, according to many human rights groups, would exempt both soldiers and guerillas from prosecution for killings, kidnappings and acts of torture committed during the civil war.

Forensic work in Guatemala

Many of the people who have been kidnapped or disappeared in Guatemala were killed and buried in clandestine mass graves in the countryside. On many occasions, local and international human rights organizations have denounced the existence of these clandestine graves, and requested full investigations through a Special Commission of Inquiry for the investigation of disappeared people.

In 1991, EAAF began working in Guatemala. At the request of local human rights organizations GAM and CONAVIGUA, EAAF participated in forensic missions in 1991, 1992 and 1993. On our own and as part of larger forensic delegations, EAAF exhumed remains of disappeared people in Chontala, Quiche (1991) and San Jose Pachoa Lemoa, Quiche (1992). Some of these missions were partially sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Washington D.C.) and Physicians for Human Rights (Boston, USA). In each mission, the forensic professionals worked as expert witnesses for local judges investigating the incidents.

Due to the large number of cases which require investigation, Guatemalan human rights organizations have repeatedly demanded that a local forensic team be formed and trained to carry out exhumations and analysis of human remains. As these organizations stated in a joint declaration in 1992: "Peace will not come to Guatemala as long as the remains of our massacred relatives continue...

to be buried in clandestine cemeteries, and we are unable to give them Christian burials. We do not want our dead to be abandoned in the ravines...For this reason we continue to demand the formation of forensic teams in order to continue the exhumations.”

In 1992, the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights (IIDH) and the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) sponsored a six-week training seminar in Guatemala for local anthropologists who wished to form a non-governmental forensic anthropology team. A shorter seminar was also given to judges, lawyers, governmental and non-governmental organizations on the ways forensic anthropology can be applied to the investigation of human rights violations. EAAF members were invited among the foreign experts who conducted these seminars. One EAAF member, sponsored by the AAAS, returned in 1993 to exchange experiences with the recently formed local team, the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Team (EGAF). ECAF is a non governmental organization, currently composed of 9 members, that conducts forensic anthropological work in the human rights field throughout Guatemala and in other countries.

El Petén: Historical Backgound

El Petén is Guatemala’s northernmost department. Bordering on Mexico and Belize, it has more historic and geographic links with Mexico than with the rest of Guatemala. Most of its vast area is covered by dense jungle, and because of its inaccessibility and harsh living conditions, it was largely uninhabited for the first half of this century. Efforts to populate it occurred only after 1954, when the Guatemalan military, supported by local elites and the U.S. government, overthrew President Jacobo Arbenz in a coup. The coup was motivated by opposition to Arbenz’s agrarian reform policies, and the military-backed governments which assumed power after 1954 took a different approach to Guatemala’s agrarian issues. The governments of Castillo Armas and his successors attempted to solve land shortages by opening new land to cultivation: they “distributed unused or useless land owned by the State in frontier areas, leaving intact the best lands from the latifundios.” Much of this land was distributed by FYDEP (Fomento y Desarrollo de El Petén), a new agency created by the government in 1958 to oversee the colonization of El Petén. Largely under the control of the Guatemalan Army, FYDEP offered peasants across the country cheap land in El Petén which could be cleared for agriculture and or exploited for natural resources such as oil and wood. For a small amount of money, peasants received provisional tenure of the land, holding it either individually or as members of cooperative groups.

The current population of El Petén is approximately 280,600 people, 85% of whom colonized the area between the 1960s and the 1980s. These settlers came from all areas of Guatemala, particularly from the overcrowded lands of the fertile Pacific coast, where population pressure had become a serious concern to the government. Easing these pressures was one of the primary motives of the new colonization policy.

Guerrilla activity in El Petén started mainly in the late 1970s; the guerrilla group active in the area was the FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias). The Army responded with counter-insurgency tactics that did not respect the civilian population. During the early 1980s the Army directed a policy of terror, assassination and so-called “scorched earth” operations against many of the local cooperatives and settlements. According to witnesses and human rights organizations, the Kaibiles, an Army elite counterinsurgency unit, perpetrated most of the massacres in

11. Ibid. Jonas p. 70.
El Petén. Many peasants were forcibly relocated to "model villages" in "development regions" (polos de desarrollo) under the control of the army;12 others fled to other parts of the country, or to Mexico, where they settled in refugee camps.13

Less is known about the massacres which occurred in El Petén during the 1980s than about the many others allegedly committed by the Army throughout other regions of Guatemala. No complete investigation has yet been conducted in this area, although some information about several major incidents has been collected from witnesses’ testimonials. According to the accounts, massacres have occurred in the following villages: Tres Aguas (early 1981); Nueva Libertad-Sayaxché (March 1981); El Arbolito (June 17, 1981); Dos Rs (December 6, 1982); La Tecnica (December 1982); Josefínos (April 29, 1982); Los Batres (bombing occurring March 18, 1982); Macanche-Flores (involving the assassination of 15 peasants on April 22, 1982); and others.14

The massacre at "Dos Rs"

The Reyes and Ruano families were among the poor peasants who moved from the Pacific Coast to El Petén in search of land. In 1978, they founded Dos Rs (meaning the “Two Rs”), so called because of the founders’ last names. The village had a population of approximately 40 journeymen and 60 families with an average of six children each. Most of settlers came from the settlement of La Maquina in Suchitepequez, on the Pacific Coast. They cleared the land and cultivated chile, banana, pineapple, corn, beans and other plants; built a school and two churches; and dug a well.

According to survivors, in early 1982 groups of FAR guerrillas passed through Dos Rs. As they did in many other hamlets, they met with the local villagers, bought food and left. Shortly afterwards, the Army set a detachment to Las Cruces, a larger village located a few kilometers away from Dos RR. Lieutenant Carías, the commander in charge of the Las Cruces military post, attempted to organize the people of Dos Rs into civil patrols, as he had already done with 800 men from Las Cruces. The villagers of Dos Rs refused to participate, simply because, according to their accounts, they would not be remunerated for their work.

On December 5, two military trucks entered Dos Rs and the army blocked the roads leading into the village. According to witnesses on December 8, Army troops accused the population of collaborating with the local guerrilla movement, and killed approximately 500 men, women and children. Many of the corpses were allegedly thrown into the village well; while others were left lying in the nearby woods. The Army then burned Dos Rs to the ground, and slaughtered the village livestock. According to witnesses, the troops responsible for the massacre were members of the Kaibiles units from Poptum and Las Cruces.

"People were saying that something strange was happening at Dos RR’s", recalls Antonino Solis, who lived at Las Cruces but had relatives at Dos Rs. "Finally we went to see Lieutenant Carías, who was in charge of Las Cruces military detachment. He repeated what he had already said before: ‘everybody is fine at Dos Rs...We are just doing a cleaning’.

The only direct witness of the massacre saw the soldiers lock the women in the church. The soldiers then took the men out of the school where they had been kept into the forest in groups, beating them as they walked. When the men were no longer at sight, he hear the sound of machine guns. A soldier who participated in the massacre told another person interviewed by EAAF that the children were beaten on the neck with clubs and were then thrown into a dry well.

12. There were two Development Poles in El Peten: Laguna Perdida and Yanahui. From "Guatemala–Polos de Desarrollo," v. 2, CEDEC, 1990, Mexico.
13. The refugee camps in Mexico were in Campeche and Quintana Roo.
"There were rumors that Don Juan Arevalo's well was covered with earth. If this is true, we thought: It is because they dumped the bodies there," Antonino Solis continues. "So to verify our doubts we went to see...When we arrived at the site, the well looked as if it had just been covered...We looked inside and saw three hats lying on the dirt. We could not recognize who they belonged to. Then an immense doubt and a great desolation entered our souls."

Twelve years later, in July 1994, three anthropologists from EAAF — Patricia Bernardi, Dario Olmo and Silvana Turner— conducted a 20-day preliminary mission in El Petén. The mission was conducted at the request of FAMDEGUA, a local human rights organization, and was provided with support from the Legal Office of The Archbishopric of Guatemala. The state prosecutor Ramirez Ramos, and the judge in charge of the investigation, Ramirez Hernandez, were present at the site during the first days of the excavation. Peace brigade members were also present to escort members of FAMDEGUA.

First Mission of EAAF in El Petén

On the basis of evidence collected in witnesses' testimonies, EAAF members surveyed three areas within "Dos Rs" and conducted a preliminary excavation at one of them—"Pozo Arevalo" (Arevalo's well), a dry well which was designated as "Site 1".

In this preliminary mission, the goal was to conduct an initial inspection of the well. Due to time constraints and our limited logistical support, we built a very simple structure over the well, which consisted of poles with forked ends, and a crossbeam set between the poles, from which we hung a pulley. People, tools, and findings were raised from and lowered into the well by means of the pulley and ropes.

EAAF members descended six meters down the well and found the first articulated human skeletons. Ten individuals' skeletons were recovered at depths between six and eight meters, and it was evident that many more remained inside. The skeletons were all male, and belonged to persons who at the time of death had ranged in age from children to adults. Gunshot wounds to the head were found in at least two of the cases.

The individuals were fully clothed. Personal belonging were found inside their pockets. Three of the items provided information about the time at which the events occurred: Guatemalan coins dated 1977 and 1978; a 1982 calendar, and two identity cards. The date was legible only in one of them; the document was issued in 1977. This information indicates that the victims could not have been killed and buried earlier than 1982.

One of the skeletons was positively identified as that of Albino Israel Gonzalez Romero, a 22 year-old unmarried farmer. At the request of his family, his remains were reburied in 1995, during a collective ceremony and reburial of the massacre victims.
Sites 2 and 3:
Large numbers of non-articulated human bones and clothing were observed widely scattered around two overgrown areas, designated as Site 2 and Site 3. A bullet fragment and two spent cartridges cases of the type used in Israeli Galil rifles were found at site 2.

Conclusion of the first mission to Dos Rs
So far the findings were consistent with the information provided by the witnesses. It was evident, however, that a longer and larger mission was necessary to perform a complete investigation of the case. In order to reach the remains lying deeper inside the well, a better infrastructure was needed. Moreover, by the end of the first mission, the rainy season was about to start. Accordingly, a second mission was planned for 1995. This mission was the first time forensic anthropology had been used to investigate a massacre in El Petén.

Second Mission to Dos Rs, El Petén:
The second stage of work in the village of the Dos Rs was carried out from May through July, 1995 under the direction of EAAF team members Bernardi, Olmo, and Turner, who had worked on the same project the year before. During this second mission Austrian archaeologist Ute Hofmeister and artist Claudia Bernardi worked as volunteers with the team on the excavation. The project was commissioned by FAMDEGUA, and members of FAMDEGUA were present throughout the work. Members of the United Nations Human Rights Observers for Guatemala (MINUGUA) were often present at the excavation and provided crucial logistical support to the work.

Work was financed by CEBEMO (Catholic Organization for Development Corporation - The Netherlands) and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation (New York). The objective of this phase was to complete the forensic investigation of the Dos Rs. Excavations had been suspended the previous year due to logistical problems and bad weather.

Preliminary Historical Investigation
Along with excavations and laboratory analysis, EAAF conducted interviews with witnesses, relatives, and survivors in order to collect as much information as possible concerning the case. These interviews were carried out with the help of members of the local office of Catholic Church Action. EAAF and Catholic Action also gathered information on other massacres which occurred in the same region (El Petén) in the 1980s. These data might serve as the basis for future exhumations in other Petén sites.

As a result of this research, EAAF compiled a list of the names and physical characteristics of victims. The list was then compared with data from the skeletal remains. At this time 222 victims are listed by first and last name (some children are listed by last name only). However, the total number of victims remains unknown, due to the fact that a great many victims were young children for whom no family has survived. EAAF was unable to record the names of these victims.

Approximately half of the 222 listed victims were children less than twelve years of age (105 victims; 47.3 percent). The age group least represented among the victims consisted of adults over the age of fifty (5.95 percent). The youngest victim was only a few days old and the oldest was 85 years old. Table I (below) shows the total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Cohort</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Fem.</th>
<th>Und</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0-12</td>
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<td>45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-50</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I: Victims at Dos Rs, according to the Preliminary Historical Investigation, by sex and age.
number of victims registered by EAAF, by age cohort and sex. The category “undetermined sex” (“und.”) refers to children, mostly very young, whose full names, sex, and family of origin were not known by witnesses.

Archaeological Work Site One: The Well

Site One was an unfinished dry well, circular and with a diameter of 2.15 meters at the mouth, which was level with the surface. The depth of the well was not known at the beginning of the exhumation; witnesses’ estimates ranged from ten meters to 26 meters. In 1994, after one month of work, EAAF excavators reached a depth of eight meters and recovered ten complete skeletons and remains from four incomplete skeletons.

In the second stage of the mission, carried out in the summer of 1995, a plan for further excavation was designed with the advice of an engineer. The plan included the removal of earth from the periphery of the well, in order to build a platform at a depth of six meters from the surface. In this way access was gained to more of the remains. Results of these excavations are documented below. As excavation moved deeper, the platform was lowered proportionally in order to gain further access without damaging the remains (see photo).

In the first stage of excavation, which entailed moving a great deal of earth from around the well, EAAF contracted workers from nearby Las Cruces. On occasion excavators also made use of a bulldozer provided by the Mayoralty of La Libertad. One problem encountered during excavation was periodic collapses of the walls of the well and those surrounding the platform.
When this occurred, walls were shored up with wooden timbers supported by crossbeams (see photo above).

Once the level of the remains had been reached, excavation followed along natural strata, in order to preserve the articulation of skeletal remains. The numerical sequence used in 1994 was resumed in the designation for the skeletons discovered in 1995. However, because of the vertical position of the skeletons and the fact that they were so entangled together, it was decided that after ten meters excavation would proceed along artificial strata 50 centimeters in thickness.

Excavations continued until July 14, 1995. During this time at least 156 skeletons were recovered. Clothing and personal effects were also found, as well as firearm projectiles. These projectiles provide important evidence concerning the cause of the death. The skeletal remains of six dogs were also exhumed along with the human remains. Judging from the distribution of remains and the depths at which they were discovered, the women and children were the first to be thrown into the well. Their remains were found entangled at the bottom. Male remains were then found above the women and children.

At the end of excavation of Site One, the well had been excavated to its original depth of 12.20 meters, with a base 90 centimeters in diameter. Once this work was completed, EAAF closed the well and leveled the excavated area on the surface.

Surface Sites

According to witnesses, residents of the Two RRs were taken out of the village in groups and executed in the woods. In July 1994 it was found that surface skeletal remains had been observed by residents of the area in at least two places. These reports were corroborated by EAAF in preliminary work. EAAF visited the sites, known as La Aguada and Los Salazares, both of which are located in the woods near the Dos Rs. In these places, human skeletal remains, clothing, personal effects, and ballistic evidence were observed in the underbrush.

Site Two: La Aguada

On June 1, 1995, EAAF conducted a survey and collection of skeletal remains and associated evidence which were dispersed over an area of approximately 1,400 square meters. Representatives of the Justice of the Peace of Sayaxche, the Public Ministry, and members of MINUGUA were present for this stage of the project. The work took place in an area known as La Aguada, located in a former reservoir which is now thickly covered in vegetation, approximately six kilometers north of Site One.
The remains were found disarticulated, incomplete, and in an severe state of deterioration. This was due in large part to damage by fire and other external factors, including various predators such as dogs, birds, mountain lions, and vultures, as well as rodents and insects. These animals scattered the bones in different ways and left tooth marks and other damage.

The heavy foliage on the woods made it difficult to establish a consistent system of coordinates for the whole area. Instead the remains and associated evidence found on the surface were marked with colored blazes. When a group of skeletal remains and related evidence was observed particularly close together, it was identified as a "concentration." Eighteen concentrations were discovered and marked in this manner. Once the entire area was covered, all evidence from the concentrations was collected.

**Site Three: Los Salazares**

On May 19, 1995, in the presence of the same local authorities who witnessed the work at La Aguada, observation and collection of evidence for the area known as Los Salazares (Site Three) was carried out. This site is located approximately 12 kilometers south of Site One. It consists of an area of approximately 400 square meters, covered in foliage.

As in Site Two, human remains and associated evidence were observed on the surface with signs of fire damage. They had been scattered by the actions of predators and of the weather. A survey was made of the entire area and 14 concentrations of skeletal remains and clothing were marked with red blazes. After the inspection was complete, all the physical evidence in the area was collected.

In spite of the fact that the condition of the remains was very poor, some evidence concerning cause of death was recovered. Fragments of skull were found with fractures consistent with lesions caused by projectiles from firearms. The ballistic evidence associated with the remains also included three empty shells from Galil rifles. It was not possible to establish whether the victims were alive when they were taken into the area. However, the presence of empty shells next to skeletal remains which sustain lesions caused by gunshot wounds can be added to the testimonies that victims were brought to the woods to be assassinated. Taken together, these data strongly suggest extrajudicial executions.

**Laboratory Analysis**

Analysis of the remains found in Site One began in July 1994 with the skeletons which were recovered first, and continued in June and July 1995 once the excavation of the well had been completed.

**Minimum Number, Sex, and Age of Victims**

Laboratory analysis increased the minimum number of individuals recovered in Site One from 156 to 161. Skeletons corresponded to individuals of both sexes and all ages. Sixty-seven (41.35 percent) were of children under twelve years of age with an average age of 7 years old. Adults over fifty were the least represented age cohort (17 individuals; 10.5 percent).

It was not possible to determine the sex of 74 of the skeletons (45.65 percent). Most of these cases were children (67 individuals), for whom sexual dimorphism is not yet expressed in the skeletal system. In the remaining seven cases, deterioration of the remains was so severe that sex could not be determined.

**Comparison of Preliminary Historical Investigation and Forensic Investigation**

The following table shows the distribution by sex and age cohort for the skeletons exhumed from Site One and analyzed in the laboratory [lab.], in comparison with the list of victims generated from preliminary research [prel.].

Note: The nine individuals found in Sites Two and Three must be added to this table, bringing
the minimum number of skeletons recovered in archaeological work from 162 to 171 individuals.

In this table we can see the discrepancy between the 222 persons listed from preliminary research and the minimum number of individuals (171) recovered through forensic investigation.

This difference was particularly large in the category of children under twelve: the victims' list records 38 more children than were recovered in archaeological work. This discrepancy can be explained in part by the poor conditions of the skeletal remains of the infants, as well as other difficulties of the investigation (which have been described above). For this reason we can only speak of a "minimum number" of skeletons. It is possible that a greater number of individuals are actually represented among the skeletal remains recovered. In addition, it may be true that some children were not thrown into the well but instead were buried elsewhere or left on the surface in some other part of the village.

Another significant difference between the list of victims and the exhumed remains can be found in the age cohorts of women between the ages of thirteen and 37 years old: that is to say, girls and young adult women. In these age groups the victims' list records 29 more women than the results of forensic investigation. The explanation for this discrepancy may lie in certain circumstances of the massacre. Some reports state that a group of women were separated from the rest to prepare food for the soldiers while they remained in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Chort</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<th>Undeterm.</th>
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<td>Totals:</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II: Comparison between the historical data and the Forensic Laboratory results.

The youngest women could have been taken to the woods and raped and murdered there. In all probability, their bodies were abandoned where they were killed.

With respect to the surface sites, the remains found at Site Two (La Aguada) were classified according to type of bone and laterality. A minimum number of four individuals was determined through this analysis. Ninety percent of the skeletal remains recovered were of long bones, and ten percent were of flat bones corresponding to skull and rib fragments. The same methods were used for the remains from Site Three (Los Salazares). A minimum number of five individuals was determined for Site Three.
State of Preservation/Peri- and Post-mortem Lesions

As stated above, the remains found on the surface in sites 2 and 3 were in an extremely bad state of preservation, due to a variety of external factors. A similar situation was found at Site 1. Here, the damage to the bones resulting from the bodies being thrown into the well and from the pressure of the earth on top of them may be responsible for the numerous peri- and post-mortem fractures. In addition, deformations in the bones were observed which corresponded to the curvature of the well's walls. These deformations could have been caused by the same factors described above.

In addition to these damages, the skeletal remains demonstrate severe traumas caused by gunshot wounds as well as lesions incurred when the bodies fell into the well and were then crushed. At least 29 victims received gunshot wounds, as determined by the recovery of projectiles associated with the remains, and/or the observation of lesions consistent with gunshot wounds in the skull and thorax. These lesions provide important evidence as to the cause of death.

Four individuals were found with their hands tied behind their back and ropes around their necks. The cause of death for these victims may have been hanging or strangulation.

Identification

Identification is a process of comparison between the data obtained through the study of skeletal remains and physical information on the victims supplied by relatives and witnesses. In the case of the Dos Rs, most families had all of their members killed, so that the solicitation of pre-mortem data was not possible. In addition, most of the victims massacred were recent migrants to the area coming from parts of the country. For this reason, it was difficult to track down surviving relatives for these victims. A third factor working against the identification of victims is the almost total absence of both clinics or of dentists in the area which the population might have made use of. For this reason, medical and dental records, two primary sources for pre-mortem physical data, were not available.

Nevertheless, it was possible to establish three tentative identifications based on external factors: the discovery of an identity card, a photograph, and a raffle ticket. These pieces of evidence were found in the pockets of clothing associated with the skeletons. They established ties to relatives who provided physical data, which in turn led to the positive identification of the following people: Albino Israel Gonzalez Carías, a farmer from Las Cruces, 22 years old; Cristobal Aquino, son of Federico Aquino, 17 years old;
and Adan Pineda, a male child who was killed in the massacre along with his family. The names of these three people appear on the list of victims.

On July 25, 1995, representatives of FAMDEGUA and EAAF delivered the forensic report to the District Justice of the Peace of Sayaxché, Sr. Raúl Armando Ramírez Hernández. In accordance with Guatemalan justice requirements, a public exposition of the remains and other evidence retrieved from Site One was held on July 29, 1995 in the all-purpose building of the village of Las Cruces. There, relatives and neighbors had the opportunity to view the remains and attempt to recognize specific characteristics, clothing, or personal affects of the victims.

As a result of this exposition, the Judge certified the identification of sixteen other people, all of whom were named in the list of victims of the massacre at the Dos Rs. These individuals were: Juan de Dios, 25 years old; Felipe Arriaga, Rene Jimenez Castillo, and Esteban Romero, all approximately 55 years old; Jeronimo Muñoz, and José Domingo Batres, both 50 years old; Juan Mejía Echeverría, 60 years old; Prospero Ramírez, 65 years old; Cristobal Aquino, Ramiro Gomez Hernández, Angelina Hernández Lima, Rosa Hernández, and Elida Esperanza Arriaga, all 6 years old; Albina Canan and Maritza Granados, both 8 years old; and Dina Arévalo, 16 years old.

On the morning of Sunday, July 30, 1995, a religious ceremony was performed among the ruins of the Dos Rs, in the presence of the Bishop of the Petén, Monseñor Rodolfo Bobadilla. Afterwards, a procession carried urns containing the remains of the victims to the cemetery of Las Cruces. The urns were laid side by side in a collective grave. The remains of those persons identified in forensic analysis or recognized were placed in a special section of the same common grave, in case their relatives should ask to have them re-exhumed in order to move them to another cemetery or to individual graves.

The investigation of the massacre which occurred in the areas of the village of the Two RRs in December 1982 has begun to shed light on the repression which existed in the Petén in the 1980s. More specifically, the investigation has uncovered a history which has been hidden under several meters of earth. Investigation of the past is fundamental to the peace process in Guatemala, which is taking its first few steps down a long road. The massacre at the Dos Rs is just one terrible example of this past.

Current Situation

FAMDEGUA will try to prosecute General Ríos Montt for the massacre at Dos Rs. The case will also be presented at the future UN Truth Commission emerging from the peace accords.
Grim Remains
Unearthing a massacre in Guatemala
By Mary Jo McConahay
I rented Jeep hurried along a dirt road in northern Guatemala under a yellow sun already hot at midmorning. "Look for a flame tree on the right," someone had said. Amid the dust and potholes rumbled pickups carrying local priests with pickaxes, newly arrived Argentine forensics experts and a handful of shoveling, stone-faced survivors of a 12-year-old massacre.

We were a caravan seeking the massacre: human bones, perhaps thousands of them, which might tell the true story of a hidden chapter of the hemisphere’s history. If the bodies could be found, the survivors of the massacre might be able to reclaim lands they lost during a long and brutal war. And Guatemala would take another tentative step toward restoring its fragile democracy.

The blooms of the flame tree shone like stoplights through the dust, and a silen farmer opened a gate onto a narrow break between cornfields. We headed into miles of farm pious gone wild and a stretch of rain forest where peasants had hunted tasty leptodactyli rodents and wild boar. As we approached the place where the village called Dos RR’s once stood, I heard the eerie cries of howler monkeys and watched as clouds of black butterflies rose from the scrub in startling bursts. There were no signs of human activity, however, if the locals believed the land had been cursed by so much killing.

I had undertaken this journey because of the stories told by those who knew the village that once stood here. It had been a settlement cut off from the jungle of El Peten, a vast rain forest stretching from Chiapas to Belize, colonized by peasants using slash-and-burn farming methods. "Skulls in the fields explode when you burn around Dos RR’s," said a friend who lived on the Usumacinta River, four hard-road hours away. Another friend told me to look for the unfinished well in which the villagers had once searched for water.

Through a friend, I had months earlier tracked down one of the few survivors of the massacre, now a janitor in a Guatemala City hotel. The janitor was very poor, and my friend, a college professor, brought him old clothes each time he visited the hotel. I will call him Pedro Garcia, though, as with the other villagers mentioned here, that is not his real name. Over the years, Pedro confided to my professor friend the story of what happened at Dos RR.

I found Pedro in a remote corner of the lobby, sweeping up bits of dirt around the flower pots. When I introduced myself and mentioned the name of Dos RR, his face went pale. He grasped the handle and stared hard at me, then looked around to make sure no one else was listening. Yes, he said finally, in a decisive tone, he would talk into my tape recorder, because I was a friend of his friend, and because it is time." Pedro led me furtively up a labyrinth of the hotel’s back stairs, where we sat near the trash drop and spoke for several hours. He often spoke in the present tense, as if he were reliving the moments armed men arrived at the isolated family farm where he lived with two daughters and their husbands, two sons and their wives, and eight other children.

The killings in Dos RR’s took place during the height of the Guatemalan army’s counterinsurgency campaign. In an effort to separate leftist guerrillas from their
GUATEMALA

Small armsEQuated, the miners turned a somber face, standing at the foot of the mine shaft. The sun was setting, casting long shadows across the rugged landscape. The miners were tired, their clothes covered in dust, their faces etched with the strains of hard labor. They were miners, the backbone of the Guatemalan economy, working under the heavy weight of poverty and oppression.

Pedro García remembered the faces of the miners, their voices, their stories. They were the miners of Dos RR's, a small town in the highlands of Guatemala. Pedro had worked there for many years, through the good times and the bad. He knew them all by name, knew their struggles, their dreams.

Pedro's father, a miner, had taught him the craft of mining at an early age. Pedro had followed in his footsteps, mining the silver and gold that were the lifeblood of the town. But mining was more than just a job for Pedro; it was a way of life, a way to provide for his family.

The miners of Dos RR's were not just mining for gold and silver; they were mining for justice. They mined for the right to a fair wage, for the right to a safe working environment, for the right to be treated with respect. But their efforts were met with resistance, with violence, with/plain text
GUATEMALA

brother Ernesto and I reached munc’s house, armed men were there in civilian clothes, but underneath you could see their soldiers’ camouflage. On top, they had put on the clothes of those they had already killed. They were building my uncle and his four young children in the cooking shed, and his wife, too, who was very sick. Her eyes were so red — she was afraid, she knew something was going to happen.

When the brothers started to hold, they were stopped by a gringo, and joined to order the others, Ernesto would be dead in a few hours.

The Gómez García’s testimonies were careful in detail. It took its main points to a church person I trusted in Perez. He rose from his desk to close the office door. “We know about this, people have been coming to us,” he said. He asked me not to go looking for the disappeared village. Investigators in the guise of hunters were reconnoitering at the site right now for the purposes of a legal exhumation, he said, but the appearance of a gringo asking questions could alert those who might want the crime hidden. He invited me to accompany the scientists

their remains mixed up in gullies and groves.

The job seemed one for a relatively new breed of scientists — forensic anthropologists. Like archaeologists, they carefully unearthed history by digging up the dead. Like legal investigators, they were looking to solve crimes. The young Argentinian and Guatemalan teams (no one is over 40) are among the few scientists of their kind regularly combining anthropology and archaeology to give voice to victims of political mass murder.

Their conclusions have been rejected by the grieving when science determines remains are not those of political victims. More common, they have been threatened by those in authority who think the research group is too close to those who might be found among the crowd of some 10,000 people at the wall.

In this and in other investigations, a delicate balance is struck between gathering enough information to obtain a judge’s order for exhumation, and giving the families the best evidence that their lost ones could be recovered.

We walked single-file in the open landscape through grass and wooded areas, across the hill that somehow seemed less real, and easier to cross.

“T

The man call for digging a trench in come in from the side,” senior anthropologist Patricia Bernardo said, thinking out loud as she moved next to Juan Avelar’s well at Dos RR’s. She glanced around on his bulls and hogs on hips, a blue handkerchief around

ers, the head of the group, along the side of the wall. The RR’s.

and others when they began their task.

In 1994, events were converging to lift the silence about Dos RR’s. The arms had abandoned its camp and burned cement box buildings in the garrison at Los Cejones, the market and cattle-crop town five miles southeast. Peace talks between the government and the guerrillas were under way. The Perez’s Roman Catholic bishop had opened an office to help alleviate peasants’ complaints about the government’s paper, the human rights — to obtain the certificates the children enrolled in school, for instance. Unexpectedly, survivors of Dos RR’s appeared because they were too few to ever think of the old farmland and work it again for their families, they required proof of the deaths of the husbands, fathers, sisters and others in whom their name was legally registered. The problem, they said, was that no death certificates had been issued by municipal authorities, because the victims had been murdered by the army.

And how were they to prove relatives died at all, since their bodies had been disposed of in pits in the bottom of a dry well or her neck. A short-haired blond woman in her mid-30s, Bernardo dropped her towel and ran in shock and grief at the sight of her first bullet-pierced skull in 1994, the day she was charged by police to command after just minutes on site.

Sihana Turner, a new recruit to the team still in her 20s, a ticklish in order and shifting yet compassionate of manners, was brushing together sprints with vines along side his more experienced teammate. Darío Ochoa. He is a expert, urban and well-spoken Biranan Atez resident whose time away from the site is spent teaching universal classes in forensic anthropology. Together, Turner and Ochoa supervised the construction of a kind of sarcophagus, 6 feet tall and spanning the 6 feet mouth of the well, from which a bucket to excavate the well’s contents would be suspended.

Everyone inched in. Two local priests, one coughing with euphony, the other smiling merrily into clear broth. Someone threw a rope over the corner of the sarcophagus to attach the bucket, and anthropologists, lawyers, farmers, waitresses, widows and sympathizing

ing patiently for the appearance of horses.

The slow process gained on the nerves of some of the government officials with the excavation. Two uniformed national policemen banded themselves with reading the names of everyone on site. The district attorney, Mario Allende, Ramon Ramos, who had in turn in the collection of evidence and declare case to investigate, said he didn’t think anyone would be discovered. He was palpably nervous — district attorneys have been threatened and then shot, and their houses burned down, for facilitating investigations like this one. When Ramon announced he was suspending the dig for two days, some cried foul.

"You can’t do that," said a church lawyer, quoting chapter and verse from a new law that’s been carried in hand.

Ochoa was unsure: "We came 3,000 miles, and you’re coming back 300. Can’t you wait a little longer?"

Ramos turned to the lawyer, gesturing at the abandoned bucket and the bucket of dirt, and said, "I talk everyone knows it was the military, but this was all 1972 years ago. I have only two words to

In the summer of 1994, a non-government human-rights activist group, the Families of the Disappeared in Guatemala (FADEMIGUA) filed a request for a judge’s order to begin the exhumation at Dos RR’s. Three FADEMIGUA members who collected accounts of events and descriptions of the victims — including low even a month ago — have been present, and others are on the way along side the support of a court, and the others.

I

A cordon of rubber men wearing black and red ties, and with their faces hidden, guards the entrance to the village for the second time on the East Avelar’s time to enter the village. But some, who had earlier returned.

OCTOBER 27 - NOVEMBER 2, 1995 LA WEEKLY 27
GUATEMALA

Why, I wondered, did Carmen de
Ferret, a timid-looking 35-year-old peasant
mother of six, expose herself in this wa
in the heat and beat others to the
open sun in the woods?

"I was amazed when I saw them digg
out the well," she said quietly, "because for so long we thought our lives
were worth nothing to anyone. We
hardly knew, because we felt that for
them, for others whose lives were worth
something, we were like some animals
who could be killed, even for speaking."

Seeing our caravan arrive from her
house, outside where Don RR's once
stood, had been a shock. The last time so
many vehicles entered the village was when
a caravan of army and civilian
trucks came from Las Cruces after the
massacre to steal the goods of the deat
: in, pigs, calves, chickens, furniture, clothing that could be stolen before they
continued the place down. When Carmen
le Père became a person what was happening this
may, however, was even more with the
motion of the event, realizing that for
once the dead peasants were being con
 sidered human beings. That was when she
washed food and water for the work

Went back without leaving a mark on
a bone. But they generally insist collect
more than just a few of the 200 bones in the
human body to find the ones that
smelled more, a crucifix with the
bivouac entrance and larger exit wounds of a bullet, the broken fragments common
to someone defining herself from blood, the congruent breaks in consecu
tive ribs of a chest crushed by a rifle butt. Eventually the well would produce such
evidence. But not on the second, long day of exhumation.

As time passed, even those who had
arrived solely as observers felt compelled
to help. Some that the excavated
dirt was piled, to sift through it with sieves
and fingerpicks alongside Turner and
Otero. Concentrating in a manner that
seemed meditative, one of the priests dis
covered tiny bones in dirt others had
already examined. "These are human, but
really too small and discolored to be of
use at the moment," Turner said in a pro
fessional tone. "I don't care how small they
are," the padre replied kindly, and
continued to extract fragments tenderly.
In previous months, I had taken testimo
ny and reviewed lists of the dead. But it was
not until the moment that dawned from a
small object like sand from a shell

that night I tried to envision
Don RR's as Federico García
Rodríguez remembered, but all I could think of was his
description of his last hours.

During his last moments in the
schoolhouse, he said, until soldiers
sent him with seven or eight other young
men to wait with the women and children at
the church, the "Liberation," he was
escorted to another 11-year-old, who was
arresting an infant brother, but the boy said
he couldn't go, because he had to stay
with the baby. And then the moment
was gone.

Inside the church, some women
who had heard the singing, thinking that
would change the hearts of the soldiers,
Instead, the soldiers turned them
grabbing the guitars for the service and
placing them on the bodies of the pas
tos. Some women nursed their
babies; many just gazed at their
children. Everyone knew what was going to
happen.

When Federico saw his brother
among the men being marched past the
church, he ran for the door telling that
he wanted to go with him, but it was
locked. The men in line looked "sadly
composed," he said. "They didn't resist,
unarmed, since they outnum
bered us," he asked. "There
were not the kind of people who opposed
authorities, and they were afraid of any
one with guns. Maybe if they had had
more of us they might have tried to
plan to defend themselves," he
answered. His brother looked dignified
as he passed the church. Federico said
prudently. About 16 minutes later, a
sound from three machine guns, then
individual shots.

No longer men were gone, sol
diers began to take the women and
children in another direction, but many
refused and held back. "They tried to
force us, but we stayed there," she said
prudently. About 10 minutes later, a
sound from three machine guns, then
didn't know what it was. The

limestone hamlet without leaving a mark on
bone. But they generally insist collect
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changed into pants and a head scarf,
and headed for the well.

By quitting time in the late afternoon,
we were back at the dig. The team had
unburied two makeshift shovels, crafted
from cupping yellow plastic cooking oil con
tainers and used cans.

Whoever covered any bodies had
likely jerry-rigged the shovels on the
spot. Logically, they would have been
left in things tossed in. The forensic
anthropologists were certain they would
find bones tomorrow.

As had dreamed: an old peasant
farmer mother, the asked early arrivals at the
well the next morning.

By this time, the scientists were feeling
endless pressure to find remains that
and something about the terror at Don
RR's. Arranging court orders and inter
viewing witnesses had already taken
weeks, and the fugitive government offi
cials were threatening to abandon the
abducted. Forensic anthropologists depart from

T

The on the fourth day, the first skele
ton was located at 22 feet 4 inches
from the center, in a black plastic
pants and a blue shirt. Inside in a pocket were a pair of glasses with black plastic
lenses and a water bottle. The second skeleton, at 23 feet, still bore a knotted
handkerchief wrapped like a blindfold around its skull. In one pocket Bernardi
found a military registration card of a man. After reviewing the names on
which identification information could still be read: Albino Carlos González,
age 22, single, lumberjack, his home address.
The card carried a photo. Young Gonzá
lez's bones were entangled with those of another man who had been dropped.
And that person's bones were found mixed with those of the next corpse, and on and on it seemed.
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At night, representatives of FAMDEGA and anthropologists retired to a
bunkhouse at a church installation in Las Cruces, unseen individuals took to
drinking rocks on one road and firing guns near here. When peasants reported army
patrols in the vicinity ~ an unusual occurrence ~ and strangers appeared at
the door, the suggested caution, and Carmen de Perez stayed home. Military presence increased in Las
Cruces; cars traveling to the road were searched for weapons. Word spread that
warned one of the priests that word was
done around town he was in danger. He
felt just deep threats threatened, he told
me. "They there haven't been an
the notes or other warnings yet that one usually finds in these situations.

By the time the rains came—early and hard—everyone around the well had begun to look more alike, tired, but also bathed in a layer of the sweat and dust that was now the common hallmark of the region. With the rains, the earth softened, and the dust turned to a sticky mud, making the area even less habitable. The rains also brought a sense of relief to the people, who had been waiting for this moment for months. However, the site of the well remained a point of contention among the community, as some believed it held magical properties, while others saw it as a mere source of water.

At the site of the well, people would often gather, sharing stories and legends about the site. Some believed that the well was the source of all the water in the region, while others said it was a place where the spirits of the ancestors would gather. Despite the varied beliefs, the well remained a central part of the community's life, a symbol of unity and resilience in the face of adversity.

The rains also brought a new sense of hope to the region, as the crops began to grow, and the wildlife returned. However, the community was still wary, knowing that the rains could also bring with them the diseases and pests that had plagued the region in the past. The people worked together, sharing knowledge and resources, to ensure that they could make the most of the rain and the new beginnings it brought.

In the end, the rains brought a sense of renewal to the region, a chance to start anew and rebuild. The people, united in their struggles, worked together to ensure that the rains would bring them the prosperity and peace they so desperately sought.
The General and the Ghosts — A Guatemalan Saga

By Trish O’Kane
Chronicle Foreign Service

Las RR, Guatemala

Where a village once stood, there is now a vast field of overgrown weeds that the jungle is steadily reclaiming. There are no ruins, nothing to indicate that this was once the home of 43 families. Las RR has disappeared completely, even from government records.

In 1982, an estimated 250 to 400 people — the entire population of Las RR — died horrifically at the hands of soldiers.

Today however, at a time when Guatemala appears to be inching toward a permanent settlement of its decades-old internal conflict, the person who is largely responsible for the obliteration of Las RR is staging a comeback.

Polls show that the strongest candidate in next month’s congressional elections is former president and retired General Efrain Rios Montt, who wrote one of the bloodiest chapters in Guatemalan history with his “accomplished” counterinsurgency campaign of 1982-83.

According to human rights organizations, during Rios Montt’s campaign more than 400 villages were wiped off the map and thousands of peasants massacred. Following the destruction, which the whole world witnessed but did not act to stop, the rural base of Guatemala’s guerrillas was destroyed, the general, who came to power via a coup, was ousted himself in 1983 and retired from politics.

“Now is it possible that someone accused of the United Nations of genocide and atrocities in the early ‘80s who was a candidate for congress?” asked human rights activist Factor Mendez last week at a public forum.

Ex-President Plans Return

The answer is that Rios Montt has made an impressive showing among Guatemalans who believe in the need for a strongman. Over the past few years, he has organized a political party to prepare his return from the wilderness.

Guatemala’s constitution provides for the possibility of presidential elections more than once a year, but only if a major crisis develops. That crisis is brought about by the military, which has never been willing to let the civilian government plan its own elections.

Las RR soldiers left an armored troop carrier near the presidential palace in Guatemala City in 1983, one day after a military coup toppled the government of General Rios Montt.

The Guatemalan army is now preparing to patrol the streets, just as it did in 1983 when it overthrew the civilian government of Rios Montt.

There were many cadavers of the men, deceptively. There were a pile of bodies at the roots of a tree, which was cut down. The men were eaten. We were too afraid to even bury them, and we left.”

After 12 years of silence, the soldiers of Las RR finally broke out this month in Guatemala. On July 4, Family Members of the Disappeared and a team of anthropologists and archaeologists began excavating a well where many of the cadavers were stuffed.

Mingled By History

On the first day of the dig, only mud and scraped of clothing were found. Mano Alfonso Ramirez, the government representative sent to observe the exhumation, said there was nothing there and returned to the capital.

On the second day of the dig, 20 feet below the surface, the mummies of the farmers who were killed exactly two decades ago were recovered. Five skeletons and estimate that there are many more in the well.

Since there are no known surviving relatives of the dead, it is not possible to say exactly how many people died in Las RR, but more than half of them were believed to be children. The anthropologists and identification of victims will be difficult, since there are very few living family members.

Two other cemeteries were discovered in this month with walking distance of the well. On a few hill covered with jungle growth, it was not possible to dig up a heavy cover of leaves.

The excavations continue until the end of the month, and then the bones are taken to the laboratory to determine cause of death. Their findings will be used in the case that Family Members of the Disappeared is preparing against Rios Montt.

The farmer's wife at the excavation site said, "We feel at least we know that someone has come here to see what happened to our family, but we left after that we were gunned down by the army."

“It is very painful for me to remember this,” she said. “Outside...