

# *A man of one hundred battles*

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By María Josefina Arce

A man of the people, humble, kind and supportive, but also intrepid. That was Commander Camilo Cienfuegos, whom Heroic Guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara described as the comrade of one hundred battles.

Much has been written about the Hero of Yaguajay, to whom every October 28 the Cuban people pay heartfelt tribute on the anniversary of his physical disappearance in his youth.

Sixty-three years have passed since that sad moment. Witnesses of that time remember the massive concentration and the pain and tears of many when the news was known.

His friendship with Che and the historical leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro, with whom he came on the Granma yacht and already on Cuban soil he fought against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, was profound.

Of extraordinary virtues, Camilo became Commander of the Rebel Army, loved, respected and admired for his frankness, honesty and his willingness to face any danger with simplicity.

During the war for our definitive independence, he was the protagonist of important events. He led the column # 2 "Antonio Maceo", whose mission was to reach from the Sierra Maestra, in eastern Cuba, to the province of Pinar del Rio to extend the libertarian deed to the west of the national territory.

He was in charge of the capture of the town of Yaguajay, in the then province of Las Villas, which required several days of intense struggle and coincided with the liberation of the city of Santa Clara by the column #8 "Ciro Redondo", led by Che Guevara.

Many are the anecdotes that speak of the exceptional man and revolutionary that was Camilo Cienfuegos, who earned the respect of the enemy forces. Historians remember that when he took the Columbia Barracks in Havana, the military of the tyranny applauded him.

Camilo is still present. From generation to generation of Cubans his example has been kept alive, his loyalty to the revolution, his interest in the poorest sectors where he came from, so he knew closely the injustices experienced for decades.

How every October 28 the sea and the rivers of Cuba are filled with flowers, is the tribute of the Cubans to the beloved Commander of "...a big smile, a big heart...", as described by the poet Mirta Aguirre in her verses and that reflect how the people saw the so-called "Lord of the Vanguard".

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