

A flower for Camilo



Alive in the historical memory of the Cuban people, Camilo Cienfuegos will always be remembered as an intrepid fighter, one of the original expeditionaries on the Granma yacht. His courage won him the title of Hero of Yaguajay, one of the key battles that sealed the 1959 victory of the Rebel Army led by Fidel.

From a modest Havana family, a tailor by trade, his jovial temperament, unforgettable smile, and heroic accomplishments in the Rebel Army, early on made him one of the Cuban Revolution's most charismatic leaders.

In the Sierra Maestra he joined the José Martí Column 1, under the command of the Comandante en jefe, participating in numerous battles.

On April 16, 1958, he was promoted to Comandante, to lead the Antonio Maceo Column 2, operating in a triangular area, between the important cities of Bayamo, Manzanillo and Victoria de Las Tunas.

On December 31, 1958, at 6:30 pm, Commander Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán, immersed in the Rebel Army's East-West invasion, signed perhaps the shortest and most moving report of his brilliant military career, sent to Che Guevara: "Yaguajay has surrendered, I am counting the weapons, more than 350 rifles, 3 tripods, 1 mortar 81, a bazooka and equipment, see you tomorrow, Camilo." This small piece of paper, which, fortunately, history saved, reflected more than a week of bitter combat.

After the triumph of the Revolution, January 1, 1959, Camilo's activity was decisive in strengthening the Rebel Army, bringing the people together, uniting forces in support of the Revolution. Of those glorious

initial days he stated: "I went for the Revolution because I knew, I was very conscious that Cuba needed this Revolution, that Cuba needed not only the removal of the dictator, but that Cuba needed this Revolution that we have today, so that in Cuba someday there would be social justice."

In the early days of the Revolution, he was appointed Chief of the Rebel Army General Staff, a responsibility that included neutralizing and arresting the traitor Hubert Matos, after an attempted uprising in Camaguey. The plane on which he was returning to Havana disappeared on October 28, 1959 and was never found. Since then, on this day, Cuban school children and the people throw flowers into the sea and rivers throughout Cuba, as a tribute to his life and work.

(Taken from Granma)

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