

Cuban hero Harry Villegas, survivor of Che's rebel movement in Bolivia, dies at 79



Havana, December 30 (RHC)-- Revolutionary hero of Cuba, Harry 'Pombo' Villegas, one of the three surviving Cubans of the guerrilla detachment led by Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia, died on Sunday in Havana. He was 79 years old.

Villegas was born in 1940 in Yara, a town located in the foothills of the Sierra Maestra, between Bayamo and Manzanillo. At the beginning of 1958, Villegas and other young people decided to go up to the Sierra Maestra mountains to join the July 26th Movement and were accepted by Ernesto Che Guevara.

When the Ciro Redondo Column was formed, under the command of Che, Villegas was assigned to it and quickly became one of Commander Guevara's most trusted men. ?????? He participated in the Battle of Santa Clara in December 1958 and served as part of Che's security team after the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

In 1965, he was summoned by Che once again to fight in the group of Cuban internationalists in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ?????? There he took the nickname of 'Pombo', with which he has been known worldwide.

Between 1966 and 1967, 'Pombo' participated in the guerrilla movement that Che Guevara installed in Bolivia. Villegas was one of the five men, three Cubans and two Bolivians, who managed to survive the collapse of the guerrilla group in the Andean nation, where Che was killed on October 8, 1967.

After 1967, he continued to serve in the Revolutionary Armed Forces, participating as a military advisor in Angola and Nicaragua.??????? Among the highest distinctions on his resume are that of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and Brigade General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

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