

# Castro is dead. Give Praise to a hero of the Bay of Pigs Brigade



[Originally published in Dr. Rich Swier eMagazine Nov. 26, 2016](#)

My memories of Fidel Castro, the late Cuban Communist Revolutionary and Dictator, was as a young U.S. Army Intelligence officer having my Infantry Officer Basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia disrupted by the Missiles of October 1962 when the world teetered on the brink of a possible nuclear holocaust. This is until President Kennedy and his Excomm debated what to do and wisely chose a boycott instead of unleashing nuclear Armageddon. My IOOC company was alerted for a possible invasion of Cuba and my military operation specialty (MOS) was changed from the assigned Intelligence 9300 series to an Infantry platoon leader 1540. It was the scary time for us then, as armor and APCs were being loaded on flatbeds and being sent to Fort Stewart, Georgia for loading on an invasion fleet.

It was only later in 1963 while on a TDY assignment at the US ARMY CONARC Command at Fort Monroe, Virginia near Hampton that I saw at a Joint Photo Intelligence Center nissan hut what those massive U-2 film cassettes contained that my senior NCO showed me at a light table at nearby Langley Air Force Base. Evidence of why Castro wanted control over the button to unleash the nuclear holocaust against us with those Soviet supplied IRBMs in those limestone caves in Cuba. All recklessly provided by Chairman Khrushchev in his pique to show up the young US President.

### Roberto DeVarona

When I think of Fidel Castro, the late Cuban Communist Revolutionary and Dictator, I think of a local member of the Cuban community here in Pensacola, a hero of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, Roberto DeVarona, who at age 18 landed in Cuba with la Brigada 2506 only to be captured and imprisoned for nearly two years before released and returned to exile in the US. DeVarona was a fun loving local celebrity, accomplished culinary entrepreneur businessman, opera aficionado and ace poker player who loved the US, freedom, his grandchildren and family. He passed away in October, 2016 at the age of 73.



Last year he confronted an American lobbyist shilling for the opening with the Castro regime at a Tiger Bay Club presentation. He was interviewed on Pensacola Public TV Station WSRE about his experience and his family's long history in Cuba fighting both the Batista regime, that Castro and his Sierra Maestre band of compañeros toppled. He told of how at one point in his youth Batista security forces burst into his home and held them with sub machine guns. Roberto was

a true Cuban democratic patriot who shared only thing with Fidel, his love of cigars along with an occasional scotch.

My hope with Fidel's passing, amidst the flawed opening that President Obama launched, is that the kleptocratic Castro family, Raul and his extended relatives, will fall and that a free and democratic Cuba that the late Roberto DeVarona fought for will arise to free its long suffering people. If he had lived to see the passing of Fidel Castro, we know what he might say. His electric smile would have been worth a thousand words.

Not lost on me and others at DeVarono's well attended memorial service here in Pensacola was the significance of his anthem, Giuseppe Verdi's "Il Pensero" – the chorus of Hebrew slaves from Opera Nabucco which was sung at part of the farewell program.

[Watch](#) this YouTube video with English title of Il Pensero that became an Italian anthem seeking liberty from occupation and oppression. That was a reflection of DeVarona's deep appreciation of the Jewish people he knew for the re-establish of the Jewish nation of Israel and for him the longed for freedom of his fellow Cubanos.

Cuba libre!