

Day of the Tank in Cuba commemorates victory over mercenary invasion

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Photo taken from Prensa Latina

Havana, April 18 (RHC)--The Day of the Tank in Cuba today pays tribute to the fighters who pushed back the mercenaries on the second day of the U.S.-sponsored landing on the sands of Playa Giron in 1961.

Some 1,500 armed troops, trained and transported by the Central Intelligence Agency, had landed on April 17 of that year with the purpose of establishing a beachhead, setting up a provisional government already appointed in the United States and requesting a direct intervention by the U.S. Army.

The immediate response of battalions of the Rebel Army, the National Revolutionary Police and the popular militias frustrated the plan, while the participation of the T-34 tank division and SAU-100 self-propelled cannons, arrived in Cuba a few months earlier from the then Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics, was decisive for the victory.

Columns No. 1 and No. 2 of the Rebel Army, howitzer batteries and the Police battalion participated in that battle, while the nascent revolutionary anti-aircraft defense and aviation from the day before repelled the attacks of the enemy aviation.

On April 18, 1961, the maximum revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro, inspired the combatants when from one of those armored vehicles, he cannoned the ship Houston, one of the American ships in charge of transporting more personnel and equipment for the mercenaries, which had been hit by the air force.

The attacks of the self-propelled artillery and the Revolutionary Air Force on the U.S. support fleet hindered the evacuation of the fleeing mercenaries.

A day later, what Fidel Castro would later call the first great defeat of imperialism in America could be proclaimed.

The aggression cost Cuba more than 176 lives, including those of 151 combatants of the Rebel Army, the National Revolutionary Police and the National Revolutionary Militia, some 300 wounded and 50 disabled for life.

More than 1,200 captured invaders were exchanged to the United States for food and medicines (Source: Prensa Latina).

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