

NEWS

EVENTS 1963  
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Associated Press Wirephoto

SAYS FIVE AMERICANS DIED FOR INVASION  
Retired AF Maj. Gen. David W. Hutchinson

# Alabamians' role in Cuban invasion slowly unfolding

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Bit by bit, the role Alabama men played in the 1961 Cuban invasion is unfolding. Secrecy and reluctance to talk shroud the complete story of the deaths of four Birmingham men and perhaps a fifth Alabamian.

In five cities around the nation Thursday night, men were talking about the Bay of Pigs invasion in May, 1961.

SOME OF THE INFORMATION  
See 'The Record,' Page 8

was disclosed publicly for the first time. Maj. Gen. David W. Hutchinson, in Oklahoma City, said about 100 Alabama National Guardsmen were in the invasion.

Gen. Hutchinson said. The names of only four dead are known publicly. Gen. G. Holt Foster, commander of the Alabama Air National Guard, directed training of the invasion air operations. Hutchinson declared.  
Gen. Foster, however, refused to comment.

IN LITTLE ROCK, Gov. Orville Faubus said he learned of Alabama's part in the invasion "many months ago" from then Gov. John Patterson.

Patterson's family in Montgomery said Patterson is not available and cannot be reached.

THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES reported Thursday night — quoting "reliable sources" — that Air Guard pilots from Alabama, Arkansas and Virginia "were offered \$2,500 a month by the Central Intelligence Agency to take part in the Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion."

"The CIA's proposition . . . reportedly resulted in the recruitment of close to two dozen Americans for the abortive invasion," the Sun-Times said.

The newspaper said CIA agents, who identified themselves only as recruiters for Cuban exile groups, offered payment to pilots of \$2,250 a month, plus more than \$200 a month in expenses.

In New York, Edward M. Nixon, the former vice president, used a taped television show to lay a blame at the Kennedy administration for lack of air cover when 1500 Cubans hit the beaches and damaged B26s with Alabamians at the controls flew to their deaths when they tried to bomb enemy Castro's tanks.

He was wrong, he said, "I committed our power in getting it through and finishing the job . . ." Nixon said.

AND IN THE meantime, the discovery that a check was made in spring 1961 to determine whether short-staffed in the Southeastern U.S. area could handle back-up military men.

The Defense Dept. still a matter of contingency for the Air Logistics Command. A survey in the Charleston area to ascertain the capital Charleston Air Force Base could handle more than 1000 military remains.

During his interview, Hutchinson said he had no personnel who died or were killed. Properly prepared, they would have been able to turn back to the states. No such arrangements were made, however, and many deaths were inevitable. There was no request for a specific number of men for emergency service.

Gen. Hutchinson said in the Birmingham City interview that he was

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Tactical Air Force at Shaw AFB, S. C., in 1961.

Gen. Foster, Hutchinson said, told him of the impending invasion. The Alabama unit was under supervision of the Ninth Air Force.

"He came to my office and asked if he and about a dozen of his B25 pilots could be given leave so they might go out of the country for four or five months," Hutchinson said.

He added, "Gen. Foster said they'd been hired by the CIA. Gen. Foster and his men took leave of absence on civilian status."

Hutchinson contended one fighter pilot could have covered the area when they could have bombed Castro's tanks which played a big part in smashing the invasion forces.

No qualified military commander would look of sending untrained B25s without air cover where there were jet fighter interceptors, and would reasonable sense to believe the Cubans had jet fighters," he continued.

When Gen. Foster got back, Hutchinson said, he was the first before he talked to anybody.

He was heart-broken. Five of his men had been killed, and all of their efforts went up in the air in a matter of minutes.

"Gen. Foster was promised air support, and he didn't receive it."

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