

Biographical Note on Themistocles Varnava

NAME: Themistocles Varnava

PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH: Trachoni Kythreas – January 15th 1955

PLACE OF STAY PRIOR TO THE INVASION: Trachoni Kythreas

OCCUPATION: Builder

FATHER'S NAME: Varnavas

MOTHER'S NAME: Xenou

MARITAL STATUS: Single

SOLDIER / CIVILIAN: Soldier

MILITARY UNIT OF SERVICE: 361 Infantry Battalion

Brief Historical Background

Varnavas was single and prior to the Turkish invasion in 1974 he resided with his parents in Trachoni Kythreas and he was a builder.

In July 1973 he joined the National Guard to fulfil his army duties. After completing his basic training, he was stationed at the 361 Infantry Battalion, which was headquartered in Syghari at the time.

Varnava, along with other fellow soldiers, manned the posts in the area between Dikomo and Hamit Mandres, the area which was under the jurisdiction of 361 Infantry Battalion.

Upon the completion of phase 1 of the invasion, which commenced on July 20th 1974, and the takeover of the area of Dikomo – Syghari by the Turkish troops, the 361 Infantry Battalion had to relocate to Kythrea, where National Guard posts were manned.

On August 13th 1974 Varnava, along with the rest of the men of the 361 Infantry Battalion received orders to move to the area of Pahyammos Keryneias, where they remained until August 14th 1974.

There they manned posts and gunner positions of the National Guard since the area of Pahyammos was at the front line of a cease fire zone after the completion of phase 1 of the invasion.

On August 8th 1974 and upon the commencement of phase 2 of the invasion, the 361 Infantry Battalion was fiercely attacked by the Turkish troops.

After fierce battles between the outnumbered men of the battalion and the heavily armed invaders, the 361 Infantry Battalion was ordered to retreat and regroup at a height in the area of Klepini.

However, the height in question was under heavy bombing from the war ships of the invaders so the completion of the regrouping in that area was impossible.

The height where the regrouping of the 361 Infantry Battalion was supposed to take place was under heavy bombing and the invaders, accompanied by heavy armored tanks, had approached the positions

of the National Guard. Therefore and in light of the fact that there was no plan on how to deal with the situation nor any officers present, the men of the battalion began to retreat in small groups and at will towards the area of Koutsoventis and Kythrea.

Shortly after the retreat of the 361 Infantry Battalion, the area of Pahyammos – Agios Epiktitos was occupied by the Turkish troops.

The direction towards which Varnava went is not known, but according to his fellow soldiers the men of the battalion reached the area of Halefka, north of Kythrea and Kornokipos, via Trapezounta and Klepini.

At the location Halefka the men of the 361 Infantry Battalion split in two groups. One of the groups headed towards Davlos-Flamoudi, whereas the other team remained in the area of Halefka looking for a way to retreat towards the free areas.

Varnava was last seen during the retreat from the height in the area of Klepini.

Source:

Akaki Community Council