

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MERCEDES O. CUBRIA US Army, Retired (Deceased)



Mercedes Olympia Cubria was born in 1903 in Guantanamo, Cuba. She lost her mother at the age of three and moved to the United States with her two sisters when she was thirteen. She became a registered nurse in 1924 and took the oath as a naturalized US citizen the same year. Between 1924 and 1943, Mercedes worked as a nurse, an interpreter, and a rancher, returning to school in 1940 to take business courses in Philadelphia.

In February 1943, she joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which became the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in July 1943. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, she served in England as a Codes and Ciphers Officer and Security Officer in the Signal Corps for the duration of World War II. In addition to being responsible for the supervision and administration of some 60 enlisted men and women working in the code room, 2LT Cubria also set up code rooms,

determined coding equipment and personnel requirements, and ensured that compromised material was withdrawn and recoded.

Upon her promotion to Captain, Cubria was selected for a 12-week course at the Counter Intelligence Corps Center at Fort Holabird, Maryland. After serving in the Intelligence Section in the US Army Caribbean, Cubria attended the Strategic Intelligence School at Fort Holabird and became an instructor at the school. During the Korean War, MAJ Cubria served as an Analyst in the Intelligence Division at the Far East Command in Japan. She was awarded the Bronze Star medal for meritorious achievement in ground operations against the enemy. Her citation read, in part:

...displaying keen discernment and analytical acumen, Major Cubria played a dominant role in the development of a revolutionary method for target designation which served as a basis for planning air strikes and interdiction operations. Thousands of bombing sorties mounted against the enemy as a result of her efforts.... Through meticulous research and carefully prepared studies, she provided Psychological Warfare with detailed, positive intelligence which materially aided in countering propaganda and imposed crippling reversals on the enemy. She actively participated in decoding captured documents, advocated and implemented a cryptosystem for plotting maps and devised an ingenious method of processing and filing data to provide ready intelligence to meet operational needs. Major Cubria's expert appraisal,

analysis, and recommendations were valuable contribution to the overall intelligence mission in support of the United Nations' campaign for world peace...

In 1953, after ten years of distinguished service, MAJ Cubria was released from the Army due to illness.

MAJ Cubria was recalled to Active Duty in 1962 at the age of 58. Cuba had undergone a Communist revolution in 1958 and thousands of Cubans had fled to the United States. MAJ Cubria spent the next 11 years assigned to the 902^d MI Group interviewing thousands of Cuban refugees and preparing daily reports for military intelligence. She also helped many of these same refugees obtain jobs, housing, schooling, and social services. During this time, Cubria worked with both Army Intelligence organizations and the Central Intelligence Agency. She received the Legion of Merit for her work during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. In 1972, she attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, after which her health began to decline, forcing her to retire from Active Duty. On her retirement date, 1 July 1973, she was 70 years old. Her health continued to decline over the next seven years until she died in 1980.



LTC Cubria was posthumously inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1988.