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THE HUNT FOR SPIES

February 28, 2011



[Capture of CIA agent Adolf Tolkachev]

In 1980, the United States Central Intelligence Agency prepared and began to purposefully implement a top secret plan for the collapse of the Soviet Union codenamed the Liberation Doctrine.

A significant role in this regard was given to secret agents from among Soviet politicians, diplomats, big businessmen, and employees of classified laboratories and research institutes. And we have to pay tribute to the "bounty hunters" from Langley - they hit the jackpot. Many high-class professionals fell into their nets and worked fruitfully in favor of the U.S.

Hero of the Soviet Union, Gennady Zaytsev, Commander of Alpha Group 1977-1988 and 1992-1993

An “ALPHA” Group Operation

April 15, 2018



One of the brightest pages in the biography of "Alfa" Group – however, there were no faded pages in the track record of our special sub-unit [*podrazdeleniye*] - is the seizure of a large group of American spies within the territory of the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s.

"Alpha" was brought to this case after the unfortunate incident that occurred with executive officer of the Foreign Ministry Alexander Ogorodnik

on June 22, 1977. During detention in his home on the Krasnopresnenskaya Embankment, he managed to commit suicide by biting a capsule of poison hidden in a fountain pen. This story is very accurately displayed in the feature film "TASS authorized to Announce" where agent Dubov does exactly this.

Incidentally, Ogorodnik, at the time a second secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Bogota, was recruited by the CIA under the threat of publishing compromising photographs in which he was captured with a University of Colombia employee Pilar Suarez.

Fearing exposure from his fiancée Olga Serova, who had guessed his hostile activities, Ogorodnik took her to the grave, adding small portions of poison sent by caring Americans. Then he asked for more. "We are very reluctant to give you another special cartridge for your pen," CIA handlers wrote to him. "We hope that you will treat it with care and do not use it recklessly... Always remember exactly where you put it..."

This is the kind of people that Alfa's officers were entrusted to capture. , Depending on their target for development, "customers" included the Second Chief [Directorate, *Glavk*] (counterintelligence), the Third Directorate [military counterintelligence], or the KGB Directorate (UKGB) for Moscow and the Moscow Region, assigned missions to Zaytsev, the commander of the special unit. I would like to emphasize that in the preparation for capture operations where the final word was given to us, dozens of employees of different agencies took part. It was common, collective work.

When developing capture operations, our officers prepared for any turn of events, from armed resistance to attempted self-destruction. Footage of the operational chronicle of those years confirms the stories of the participants of the events: the detentions were carried out masterfully, artistically and, most importantly, quickly, and were largely unnoticed by others.

In order to avoid a repeat of the unpleasant story with Ogorodnik, immediately after the detention officers of Alpha Group re-dressed spies in different clothes. After all, in case of failure the CIA invariably supplied their agents from the Soviet secret services with a vial with poison.

In our unit, it was mostly Vladimir Vladimirovich Zaitsev, with his 4th Section [*otdeleniye*] who "got his hand" on the spies. He constantly trained people and modeled various situations in actual urban conditions. For example, if there was a crowd flow and it was necessary to detain the target, but in such a way as to not cause unhealthy excitement and excessive curiosity.

After their first capture, Vladimir Nikolaevich realized that they needed to study the case. He approached his spy activities very thoughtfully and trained his personnel accordingly, turning force operations into a real art. And it is no coincidence that representatives of counterintelligence expressed the wish that his subordinates take the next spy - after a "Hare" capture, the werewolves confessed at the first interrogation and did not play silence for months. [Translator: nickname, "Zaytsev" derives from *zayats* - hare]

Of course, thanks to Aldrich Ames securing our jobs we could have given Vladimir Nikolaevich full credit in resolving this important mission. The simpler, the more more successful. But we set ourselves another task - not only the staff from Zaitsev's section, but also other "Alpha" sections had to gain the practical experience of participating in such events. All sections without exception.

I note that it might not necessarily be about the secret detention of agents of foreign intelligence services - it could be criminal authorities and leaders of mafia clans. Yes, they are not spies, but the methods of their detention are the same.

In each case, the head of the Seventh Directorate, General Ye. M. Rasshchepov, assigned a specific mission, but I was, of course, aware of the operational plan and actions carried out by my employees. There were no written reports on the work done.

In conclusion, I would like to quote Aldrich Ames: "The indignation of most CIA and FBI employees is offensive to me. They talk about my immorality, about the blood I shed of innocent people. What hypocrisy! And what, in their opinion, did Gordievsky, Ogorodnik, Varenik and Polyakov do? Prove to me that I'm any different from your "heroes."

Our officers worked on such "nice guys" and "fighters against totalitarianism." All but one of the exposed agents were executed by court

order. The Cold War was going on... However, it is still going on now, and Russia, as in previous years, is under the closest and most active scrutiny of foreign special services.

[Translator note: February 2011 Spetsnaz Rossii article began with this article by Gennady Nikolayevich Zaytsev, but there were two more articles written by his subordinate, (Colonel) **Vladimir Nikolayevich Zaytsev: *The Broken Wristband. Martha Peterson (СЛОМАННЫЙ БРАСЛЕТ. МАРТА ПЕТЕРСОН)***; and **Identification: Friend or Foe («СВОЙ — ЧУЖОЙ». АДЛЬФ ТОЛКАЧЁВ)**, and **"Gelatinous BODY." GENNADY VARENIK («СТУДЕНИСТОЕ ТЕЛО». ГЕННАДИЙ ВАРЕНИК)**.

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Vladimir Nikolayevich Zaytsev was born in the Smolensk Oblast. From the age of sixteen he worked in a factory. In 1967 he served in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. In the Committee of State Security (KGB) of the USSR from 1972. In Group Alpha from 1982 to February 1992. He went from the chief of a section [otdeleniye] of one of the subunits to Deputy Chief of Alpha Group. He is a participant in iconic anti-terror special operations. He spent a "combat tour" in Afghanistan. He was awarded the Orders of the Red Banner (1984), the Red Star (1986), "For Personal Courage," the badge "Honored Officer of the KGB of the USSR." Retired colonel. Repeated Champion of Martial Arts in the central apparatus of the KGB, Master of Sports of the USSR in three sports. Chairman of the Anti-Terror Foundation for Counter-Terrorism. In 2000-2004 worked as an Assistant to the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation M. M. Kasyanov. He supervised the unit of the "power unit" – "Deep State" engaged in operational and investigative activities.