

# *The battle at the Barn at Liopetri*



*The Liopetri Barn immediately after the historic battle of 2 September 1958*

*Above: A view from the front*

*Below: A view from the back*

*The bodies of the heroes are in circles*



## ANDREAS KARYOS

**B**orn in the village of Avgorou, Famagusta District, on 16 July 1926. After graduating from the village primary school, he later studied theology, accounting, English and Greek literature. He was an officer of PEK and a founder member of SEK, PEON and the religious association of his village. In January 1955 he joined Gregoris Afxentiou. He organised and headed the EOKA struggle in Avgorou.

On 1st April 1955 he took part in the operation to cut the electric wires near Avgorou and received severe burns. He was arrested several times for his action and after his team's attack on Achna police station, he was placed on the wanted list. He was arrested in November 1956 and incarcerated at Pyla Detention Centre, from where he escaped on 12 March 1958. He continued his action as deputy sector commander in the Kokkinochoria area.

He was known for his faith in God and his country. The following words are an indication of the purity of his patriotism:

*"I love our island of Cyprus, with its ancient civilisation, my heart beats for it and at its altar I will lay down my life itself, if I have to".*

\* \* \*

It is worth mentioning that Andreas's brother, George Karyos, also died fighting the British in a battle on 28 October 1958. Their mother, Flourentza bade farewell to her second child in an improvised couplet:

*"In forty days two sons for Cyprus did I give  
To see my country free I only hope to live".*



*The body of Andreas Karyos riddled with holes from bullets and bayonets*



## **ELIAS PAPAKYRIAKOU**

**B**orn in the village of Lythrangomi, Famagusta District, on 25 January 1938. After graduating from the village primary school he attended Famagusta Gymnasium. While still a fifth form schoolboy he joined EOKA

and acted as a member of the strike forces, participating in bombing attacks. He was on the wanted list before leaving high school.

In March 1957 he took charge of the sub-sector of Assia and the surrounding villages where he was extremely active. One of his actions was to seize French automatic guns from men of the French detachment that had intervened at Suez. When in the summer of 1958 the Turks organised systematic attacks on Greek property, he set up civil militia groups among the Greek-Cypriots in the local villages and put an end to the raids.

On 13 July 1958 on his personal instructions, the fighters of Assia blew up the water pump, the buildings and water reservoirs, which were used to provide water to the British troops billeted at Vatyli police station. On 31 July 1958 he was intercepted by a British patrol and was wounded in the leg. Despite his injuries he managed to escape. His action continued until 2 September 1958, when he died in a heroic attempt to exit from the Barn at Liopetri.



*The body of Elias Papakyriakou riddled with holes from bullets and bayonets*



## PHOTIS PITTAS

**B**orn in the village of Frenaros on 28 February 1935. He graduated from the village primary school, Famagusta Gymnasium and Morphou Teachers' College. While at college he joined EOKA. He served as teacher at Achna primary school

and was active in the fields of organisation, combat and information. The British put him on the wanted list on 18 October 1956.

As a wanted man he contributed greatly to the EOKA struggle in the villages of Lysi, Vatyli and Assia. He was arrested on 10 January 1957 and tortured mercilessly in Famagusta prison. With blood spat out as a result of the torture he painted the image of liberty on his cell wall. An eloquent record of his suffering can be found in his personal journal in which he wrote down his experiences. He was locked up at Kokkinotrimithia Detention Centre and later at Pyla from where he escaped with other freedom fighters on 12 March 1958. He continued his action as sub-sector commander in the Lysi area. He was involved in widespread and effective action. This greatly perturbed the British who imposed a two-week curfew and carried out intensive searches, but to no avail. On 2 September 1958 he fell in action fighting for a free Cyprus in the glorious battle of the Barn at Liopetri.



*The body of Photis Pittas riddled with bullets after his dramatic exit from the barn*



## CHRISTOS SAMARAS

**B**orn in Liopetri village on 12 February 1925. He attended primary school up to the fourth form. His love for learning, religion and patriotism led him to learn a great deal from reading religious books and Greek

History. He was a chanter at the village church. He was the founder of the Liopetri branch of OXEN (YMCA) and guided religious developments in the surrounding villages.

In 1954 he joined a secret organisation, which was planning an armed uprising against colonial rule. In January 1955 he joined up with Gregoris Afxentiou. He worked to recruit EOKA members. In early March 1955 the first members of EOKA Liopetri took the oath of allegiance at his house.

On 1st April he took part in the attack at Dhekelia headed by Afxentiou. On that very day he was placed on the wanted list and until his death there was a reward of 5000 pounds on his head. Throughout this period he developed action in the villages of Liopetri, Limnia, Ayios Sergios, Avgorou, Ormidia, Peristeronopigi, Gaidouras, Pyrga and Prastio. He fell at Liopetri Barn fighting for the ideals in which he believed from his earliest youth.



*Christos Samaras died with a smile on his lips*

## *The battle at the Barn of Liopetri*

On 2 September 1958 at the Barn at Liopetri EOKA fought one of its most epic battles. The humble barn was dubbed "A New Inn at Gravia". Regarding the four heroes of the battle, Andreas Karyos, Elias Papakyriakou, Photis Pittas and Christos Samaras, EOKA leader Dhigenis wrote in his Memoirs: *"It is very difficult for me to distinguish among these four brave young men and say who was the bravest of the brave. At that moment they all competed to see who was to die the bravest"*.

The facts related to the battle of the Barn and the heroic deaths of the four young men are as follows: On the night of 30 August the four freedom fighters went to Liopetri to train the local EOKA members in ambush-related issues. At 2.00 a.m. on 1<sup>st</sup> September military vehicles appeared near the village. The fighters made an attempt to leave the village but were unable to do so because of the presence of soldiers. They then decided to drive through the vice in which they were held. In the attempt they exchanged fire with British soldiers but were forced to return to Liopetri. At about 3.00 a.m. they took refuge in the barn belonging to Panayiotis Kallis.

There followed a curfew and interrogations of all the inhabitants who until 3.00 a.m. were held behind barbed wire. The barn was searched but without result. At 1.00 a.m. on 2<sup>nd</sup> September the British returned following information received, surrounded the barn and demanded from the owner to be told where the four fighters were hiding. The owner and his family gave no information despite the torture to which they were subjected. The British called on the fighters to surrender but

received no reply. Using the owner for cover, they then fired inside the barn, but once again they received no reply.

On the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> September another curfew was imposed and the barn owner was once again subjected to torture. The four men fired on a posse of soldiers drawing near the barn. The British then asked for reinforcements that were not long in arriving. The shooting continued and the fighters were called upon to surrender. A small interruption followed and the shooting resumed with even greater intensity. Several soldiers were wounded. The British threw bombs and hand grenades but to no avail. One of the fighters ran out of the barn shooting but was gunned down by a British soldier. The remaining fighters continued to shoot injuring a soldier and a captain. In a new exchange of fire a second freedom fighter was killed. A group of soldiers climbed on to the roof of the barn, where they opened a hole and threw down petrol-soaked rags. The rags caught fire but this soon went out. While the battle continued with automatic weapons and hand grenades, an English helicopter dropped firebombs and the barn was immediately set alight. The two fighters immediately ran out only to be gunned down by the soldiers.

The heroic deaths of the four EOKA fighters touched the entire Cypriot people and caused world-wide admiration. Immediately after Cyprus became independent, the place of their sacrifice, in which statues were set up honouring the four men, became a shrine of national pilgrimage. The barn and the courtyard surrounding it are now a Monument to the magnificence of their heroism and self-sacrifice.

# Liopetri Barn today



*The historic barn and part of the front courtyard as they are today*



*The busts of the four fighters in the interior of the barn*

The restoration of the Barn and the surrounding courtyard into a single Monument was done at the initiative of the "Council of Historic Memory of the EOKA Struggle 1955-1959" in co-operation with the community of Liopetri. It was designed by sculptor Nikos Kouroushis who was responsible for the monument and the busts, and by architect Margarita Danou.



THE COUNCIL OF HISTORIC MEMORY  
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