

A Soul of Love and Gallantry: W A S Ouderland BP

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In his own words W A S Ouderland has expressed, "All the actions taken as a result of my love and affection, I felt for the Bengali people." "All" those "Actions" were by a resurrected unsung hero whose heart had felt love for the free people and free land wherever in the world the brutal boots tried to annihilate the millions. He was a freedom fighter for his motherland in his teen years. At the grim time of the history, as example, when 30,000 of his unarmed compatriots have been wiped out within a matter of half an hour by Nazi air raids in Holland. The initial Dutch resistance was small but was large in determination. He was captured. But he escaped and re-joins the freedom struggle. He used his "All" multi-skills perfectly as a talented fighter. The resistance war involved information gathering and dissemination under disguise, training freedom fighter in an applied manner using basic weapons and resources and mobilizing the spirit of the oppressed to a highest dignified level. He wrote," Therefore, when events of March 1971 started with Tanks and Pakistani forces rolling in to Dhaka, I was re-living my experience of my younger days in Europe."

Like any highly skilled war strategist in the history he put his heart and head together to pull the strength against genocide by Pakistani occupation army. His loving emotion was the burning fire in the heart and the rock-hard determination was guided by his cool tactics. On the one side he befriended with the top brasses by risking his life, on the other side he picked up the real freedom loving Bengalis from the mix of collaborators and diehards, also a high risk task. He gathered top secret military information to pass over to the Mukti Bahini sector commanders. He recorded the atrocities in photographs for the conscience of the world and handed over to the world media. He took the role of a guerrilla trainer himself to train up the guerrilla right in the midst of the powerful enemy. It is amazing how strong love one had to have to drive such powerful soul to dedicate himself just for the cause of justice, irrespective of who they are. In his own words, "Deeply touched and moved by the almost unbearable suffering and atrocities I witness of the occupation force."

The hidden fire of the spirit of one European freedom fighter rekindled after many years in 1971 on the soil of Bangladesh with brightest shine of liberty and justice. The surrender of Pakistani army in the December 1971 has ended the atrocities and war. No doubt his heart was filled out with enormous joy. He was honoured with the Bir Protik, gallantry award for his unprecedented dedication despite being a foreigner. He lived in his beloved Dhaka until 1978 unfortunately only to watch the offset of his hard earned achievements for Bengali people. How painful was that for him remains unknown? He lived in Australia until 2001. He lived and died in the quite, cute and peaceful Perth far away from his two beloved lands Holland and Bangladesh for whose love he risked his life for many time.

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