

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAR 2007

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(b) (3)

April 3, 2001



No. 862

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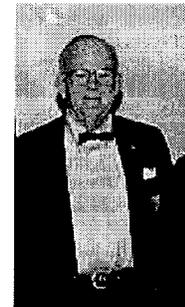
(U) OTS Directors Review 50 Years of OTS Support to Operations

~~(S)~~ The Directorate of Science and Technology's (DS&T) Office of Technical Service (OTS) is approaching its 50th anniversary, and as part of the celebration, *What's News* and the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) History Staff interviewed three OTS directors. A historian chatted with Colonel James "Trapper" Drum, the founder of the Technical Services Staff (TSS), OTS's predecessor. *What's News* joined another historian to interview former DDCI John McMahon, who oversaw the transition of OTS from the DO to the DS&T; and current director Bob Wallace ~~(S)~~. The OTS leaders explored changes in OTS personnel, business lines, and culture. They also spoke of the evolution of the office's relations with the DO, the Intelligence Community (IC), and the private sector. Finally, McMahon and Wallace gave their views on the future of technical support for operations.



~~(S)~~ D/OTS Bob Wallace ~~(S)~~ and former D/OTS John McMahon discuss the past, present, and future of OTS.

~~(S)~~ **Building the Organization.** Col. Drum drew upon expertise resident in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to build the personnel base required to meet the new organization's mission. During the second World War, technical support provided by the Research and Development Branch proved vital in the success of many OSS missions. After the war, Agency leaders saw the importance of possessing such a capability and gave Col. Drum a relatively free hand in consolidating technical support within one unit. In the mid-1970s, OTS moved from the DO to the DS&T under the leadership of John McMahon. It was a difficult period for the Agency and OTS in particular. Campus recruiting and OTS's relations with academia and industry were greatly curtailed by anti-CIA sentiment in the wake of the Congressional investigations led by the Pike and Church Committees. It



(U) TSS founder Colonel Trapper Drum.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Views of the Agency, and of patriotism, have since evolved. Wallace indicated that today, there is a resurgence of interest in serving government and working in OTS, "where a spy can be a kid again."

~~(S)~~ **As technology evolves, so does the organization.** McMahon and Wallace discussed the transition of technical capabilities once resident in OTS to other DS&T technical components. McMahon noted, "There's an evolution here, and that evolution took place in technology. As the technology has moved and advanced, the sophistication of that technology has required, I think, a specialty...and that's why the bins have changed..." OTS has

collaborative ventures with such partners as the CIA Information Operations Center [redacted] the Office of Technical Collection [redacted] and the Office of Advanced Technology and Programs [redacted] OTS continues to administer a unified field structure for the DS&T, offering some [redacted] overseas posts with fly-away teams, a capability that originated in the 1950s and was active in the McMahon era.

~~(S//NF)~~ **The Business of OTS.** While OTS has always provided a full range of technical tools in support of clandestine operations, operational requirements have driven the office to focus resources in different disciplines. Under Drum's leadership, TSS specialized in the creation and detection of alias documentation, disguises, uniforms, and other effects that created local authenticity for operations officers. The McMahon era concentrated on audio operations.

[redacted]

In looking forward, Wallace and McMahon noted that technological change might lead to examination of [redacted] as avenues for OTS work. Both noted the important contributions In-Q-Tel can make in harnessing commercial advances in information technology.

~~(S//NF)~~ Central to the success of OTS throughout its history has been the **relationship between its officers and the DO**. Colonel Drum depended on the geographical Division Chiefs in the Directorate of Plans (the DO's predecessor) for information. Following an initial period of getting to know the capabilities of TSS professionals, DO case officers soon viewed them as full partners in operations. McMahon observed that then-DCI Schlesinger's decision to move OTS into the DS&T caused concern among personnel, who worried that loss of "integrated input...on a daily basis" with the operations officers in the DO might result in reduced effectiveness. Moreover, McMahon believed he was perceived as an outsider in OTS, as he was imposed [as D/OTS] on it with 10 minutes notice and without prior consultation with OTS regarding the organizational change. These concerns were short-lived, however. DO and DS&T officers ignored wiring diagrams, and worked on getting the job done. At more senior levels, then-DDO Bill Nelson brought McMahon to all staff meetings, and DO Division Chiefs continued to view OTS as part of the solution to their operational problems. McMahon noted that it "didn't take too long" for OTS to find the DS&T to be a secure source of funds where development did not have to compete with operations, as well as an "...organization that was devoted to R&D, so that (OTS) could take that R&D and fashion it toward DO needs." McMahon concluded that "...after a while, it became a very, I think, smooth operation."

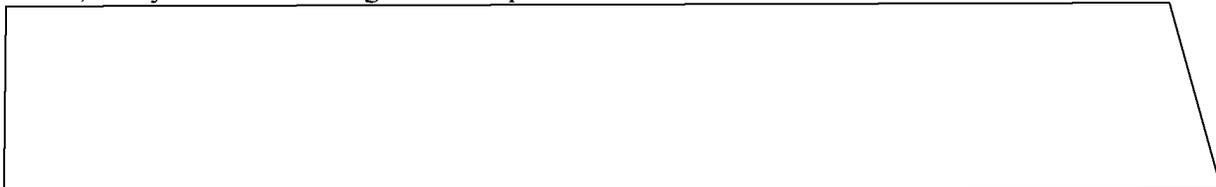


~~(S//NF)~~ The “**can-do tradition**” continues today. Wallace noted, “Although more than 90 percent of current OTS officers were never part of the DO, most of us think of ourselves as operations and DS&T officers. We continue to stay engaged with the operational divisions at all levels in an almost spiritual linkage.” Wallace noted OTS’ obvious connection to Strategic Direction, in support of Clandestine Agent Operations, and its role in the DS&T’s vision for the future, “From the point of support, Directorate level support, S&T continues to see this as a primary mission, one of three primary missions of the S&T...support to Agent Operations, ...technical collection, and ...advanced technology - R&D. Those are three core elements of the S&T, and, clearly, OTS plays right into that.” Wallace alluded to the role that OTS sustains in providing technical support to the Agency’s clandestine mission, concluding that, “Virtually no important clandestine operation in the last 50 years occurred without some OTS support.”



~~(S//NF)~~ Throughout its history, OTS has concentrated on the **usability of its technology**. Wallace observes “It doesn’t matter if it works great on the bench. We have to make sure that the device suits the capability and personality of the asset. If they’re uncomfortable with the device, they won’t use it. A noted Soviet asset, for example, tried one of our devices once, didn’t like it, and gave it a burial at sea.” McMahon agreed, noting, “Agents don’t want to be a beacon with sophisticated gear that doesn’t fit in with their lives.”

~~(S//NF)~~ **OTS partnerships** with other organizations have changed over the years. Drum developed ties in the **industrial sector** and with individual specialists within other government organizations that strengthened his organization’s ability to support operations. Many of those commercial contacts survive today. The relationship has been a two-way street; many of the technologies developed for/with OTS have become commercial successes.



Wallace noted that, “Government no longer drives technology--we do development and specialized engineering, more than breakthroughs. Companies work with us for patriotism, not dollars. My purchases are in the dozens, not millions, of units.”

~~(S)~~ **Partnerships with the Intelligence Community** have gone from nonexistent to symbiotic. McMahon remembers the IC as being viewed as “untested, and certainly not up to our security standards. DCI Schlesinger pressed for an IC Staff, and DCI Bush set it up.” The relationship has evolved rapidly since then. Wallace noted “NRO, NSA, FBI, DHS, SOCOM, you name it, all are engaged in tech development and shared operational thinking and planning with us. It’s now second nature to us.”

~~(S)~~ **Looking to the future of OTS**, McMahon observed that, “It’s thrilling to be in this business now. It’s a wide-open world, and technology is foremost. We’re getting clever



people in to make use of this technology against progressively more difficult targets. There's a great opportunity to do things and make a difference." Wallace added that, "Few jobs are more interesting than OTS jobs. I'm incredibly fortunate to be here. The 50-year history of OTS is one of remarkable success and contribution to the national interest. The country can take enormous pride in the work of TSS, Technical Services Division, and OTS officers."

~~(U//AIUO)~~ For further information on OTS 50th Anniversary activities, check out the OTS CIALink website  You'll also soon see a history of OTS written by  a member of the CIA History Staff at CSI. ~~(This is SECRET//NOFORN.)~~

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