

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Routing Slip

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI				
3	EXDIR				
4	D/ICS				
5	DDI				
6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/EEO				
14	D/Pers				
15	D/OEA	X			
16	C/PAD/OEA				
17	SA/IA				
18	AO/DCI				
19	C/IPD/OIS				
20					
21					
22					
		SUSPENSE	20 May		
			Date		

Remarks: Please refer SA/DCI's note, attached, and prepare a "greeting" for DCI to forward.

Executive Secretary
13 May 1983
Date

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secretary [redacted] 13 May

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[redacted] delivered attached letter to me this morning. A DDI officer suggested the DCI might be interested in this memorial ceremony, thus the letter and visit from [redacted]

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Pls process through system, with action from OEXA. Justice Stevens is to present a greetings, FYI; Adm Inman will also attend.

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The DCI will be out of the City from afternoon 13 June to evening 16 June, thus it will be difficult for DCI. Maybe CIA can prepare a "greeting" from the DCI, in lieu of his attendance. Date [redacted]

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FORM 101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Executive Registry

83-2565

12 May 1983
 3801 Nebraska Ave NW
 Washington, DC 20390

The Honorable William J. Casey
 Director of Central Intelligence
 Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Casey,

I have the honor of acquainting you with a significant historical event which will take place at the U. S. Naval Security Station, 3801 Nebraska Avenue NW, Washington, DC on June 17, 1983 at 10:30 A. M. This is the dedication of a memorial to the "On-the-Roof" Gang and the establishment of an annual "On-the-Roof" Gang award to the outstanding Navy and Marine Corps Enlisted Cryptologists. The memorial and the award have been made possible by the contributions of the original, associate and honorary members of the "OTRG."

The "On-the-Roof" Gang is a unique group of former enlisted personnel whose accomplishments as radio intercept operators, expert in copying the Japanese Kata Kana telegraphic code, represent the best traditions of the Naval service. In the years 1921 through 1927, several U. S. Navy and U. S. Marine Corps personnel taught themselves to copy the Japanese code and passed these skills informally to many of their contemporaries. The intelligence value of the information they collected was recognized and under the auspices of Op-20G, the former Office of the Director of Naval Communications, formal training was developed and implemented in 1928. Until 1941, this training took place in a specially constructed blockhouse on the roof of the old Main Navy building, hence the name the "On-the-Roof" Gang. These personnel were posted throughout the Pacific area at various stations and aboard ship. They were experts not only at copying Japanese radio transmissions, but developed traffic analysis and direction finding to a fine art. Some of these personnel developed their skills even further and became expert cryptanalysts. They were the nucleus of what has become the Naval Security Group.

These men are among the unsung heroes of the World War II era whose story could not be told because of security considerations. Considerable information about their training and operational accomplishments has now been declassified and made available for public review. Their stories, both official and personal, are intriguing and varied, but, above all, serve as inspiring examples of initiative, resourcefulness and dedication to duty in the service of their country.

In addition to high-ranking military officials, both active and retired, we expect approximately 45 of the original "On-the-Roof" Gang members to be present at the dedication, as well as spouses and surviving next-of-kin and a large attendance of military and civilian personnel of the Naval and Marine Corps community. This will be an exciting and meaningful event for the "OTRG" members.

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I know that their experience would be even more enhanced by your presence and, on behalf of the original members of the "OTRG", I extend a most cordial invitation to attend the dedication.

Your schedule is undoubtedly crowded and, if you are unable to attend, the "OTRG" members would be most pleased to receive a greeting from you. I would be honored to work with your staff in preparing such a greeting and would arrange for the greeting to be presented to the "OTRG" with appropriate ceremony at the dedication.

In the hope of hearing from you and on behalf of the "On-the-Roof" Gang, I remain,

Most sincerely,

A rectangular box with a black border, used to redact the signature of the sender. A handwritten flourish is visible above the box, and a small arrow points to the right from the bottom right corner of the box.

Board of Directors
"On-the-Roof" Gang Association
Secretary/Treasurer

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THE "ON-THE-ROOF" GANG

The "On-The-Roof" Gang (OTRG) is a group of 150 Navy and 26 Marine Corps enlisted men who, from 1928 until 1941, were trained as Japanese radio intercepted operators. The training was conducted under the strictest security conditions in a specially-constructed blockhouse "on the roof" of the sixth wing of the former Navy Department building on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. These men went on to establish and operate radio intercept stations in a variety of locations in the Pacific area before and during World War II as part of the Navy's Communications Intelligence network.

Successful Communications Intelligence depends on the close cooperation of radio intercept operations to search for and record the communications of actual or potential enemy forces, and cryptanalysts to read, decrypting as necessary, and translate messages.

The accomplishments of the cryptanalysts are well-known. The results of their work during this period has been recognized as the most important single factor in achieving victory in the Pacific Theatre.

The radio interceptors have gone unrecognized. They provided the cryptanalysts with material to exploit, and were highly successful in identifying the makeup and location of Japanese units and forces by applying and integrating the techniques of direction finding, call sign analysis, traffic analysis, radio fingerprinting, morse operator analysis, frequency analysis, etc.

The work of the men of the OTRG was characterized by great difficulty, loneliness and isolation, secrecy, and, in many cases, personal danger and deprivation. Radio signals can be intercepted only where they can be heard and intercept stations were often established in locations where other Naval and Marine Corps forces were not posted. They were off the beaten track and normal supply lines were not available. Many were set up in tropical locations where it was difficult to keep radio equipment operating reliably. Some were located near enemy postings and there was often imminent danger of capture or death. Strict secrecy was frustrating and often caused serious disruption among family and friends.

The intercept operators were among the very last to be evacuated from Corregidor. Some did not make it from Guam and spent years as Japanese prisoners-of-war. Others suffered from malnutrition and illness, the effects which they feel to this day.

Security has prevented their story from being made public. Only in recent years had it been possible to identify and recognize these dedicated men. Their qualities of self-reliance, self-motivation, and self-confidence are in the best traditions of honor duty, and serve as an ideal for present and future cryptologists.

Recognition of their unique accomplishments and supreme contribution to victory in the Pacific is long overdue and exceptionally well-deserved.