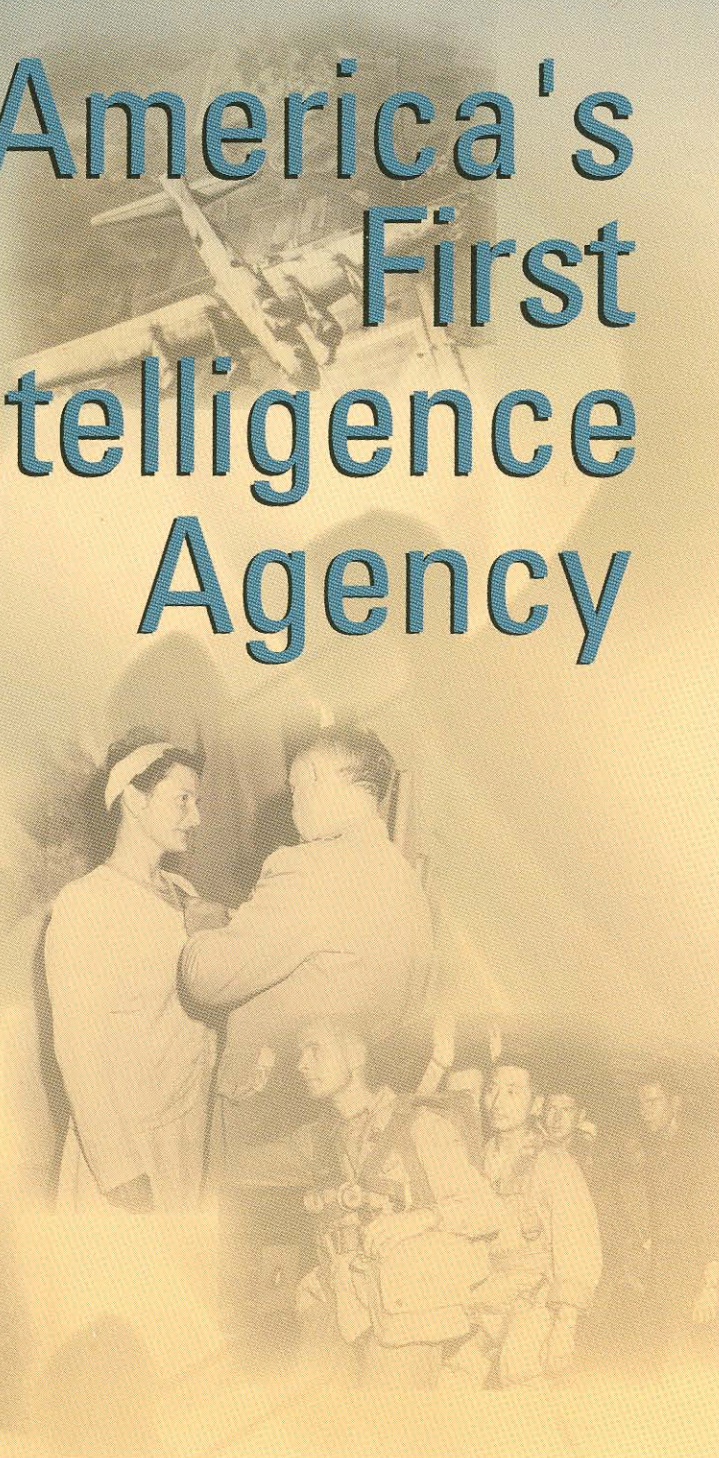
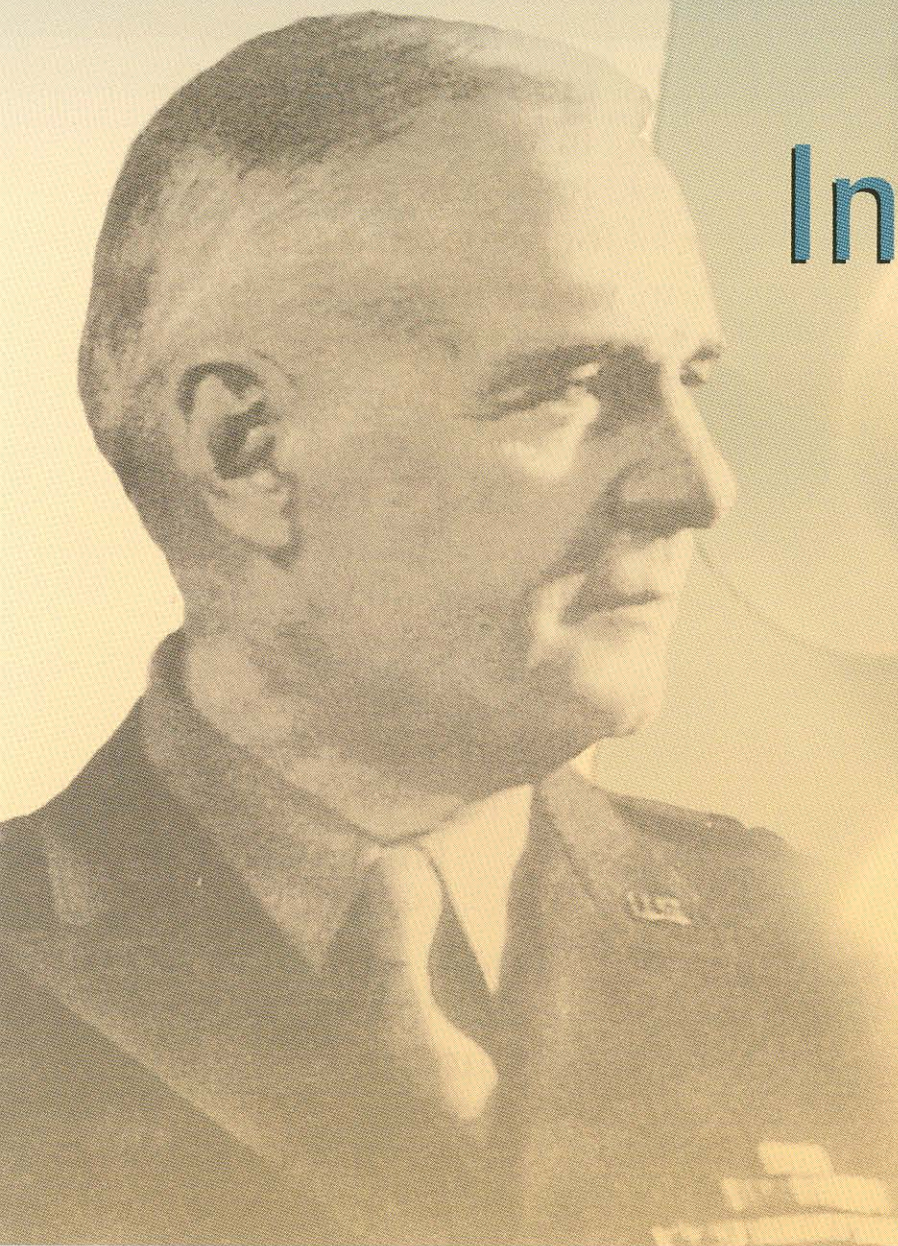


The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency





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The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) left a legacy of daring and innovation that has influenced American military and intelligence thinking since World War II. OSS owed its successes to many factors, but most of all to the foresight and drive of William J. Donovan, who built and held together the office's divergent missions and personalities. Given the toughness of OSS's adversaries and the difficulty of the tasks assigned to the office, Donovan and his lieutenants could take pride in what they achieved. Ironically, by the end of the war, he had done his job so well that his presence was no longer essential to carry American intelligence into a new peacetime era. When the White House wanted to retire him in 1945, it also took care to save valuable components of the office that he had created. Today's Central Intelligence Agency derives a significant institutional and spiritual legacy from OSS. In some cases this legacy descended directly; key personnel, files, funds, procedures, and contacts assembled by OSS found their way into the CIA more or less intact. In other cases the legacy is less tangible—but no less real.

Intelligence agencies are usually laid open to public view only when a nation is defeated in war and its conquerors are able to ransack its archives. The Office of Strategic Services is perhaps unique among intelligence services in that most of its story has been opened up by voluntary release. Over the last two decades, the Central Intelligence Agency—the heir of OSS—has gradually transferred almost all of OSS's records in its custody to the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland. Scholars and writers are mining these files to produce a growing body of accurate and insightful work on OSS.

OSS was perhaps too large and sprawling to describe in a single essay. General Donovan volunteered his office for a wide variety of missions, but he had little patience for administrative detail and never tried to force OSS into a neat organizational framework. The office restructured itself so frequently that no single chart can adequately summarize its many components. Indeed, the rapid proliferation of offices and missions means that many worthy components and exploits regrettably must be left out of such a brief survey in order to leave room for the overall picture. What follows is an attempt to describe some of the important components of OSS and to highlight some of its significant missions and personalities.

Michael Warner
CIA History Staff
May 2000

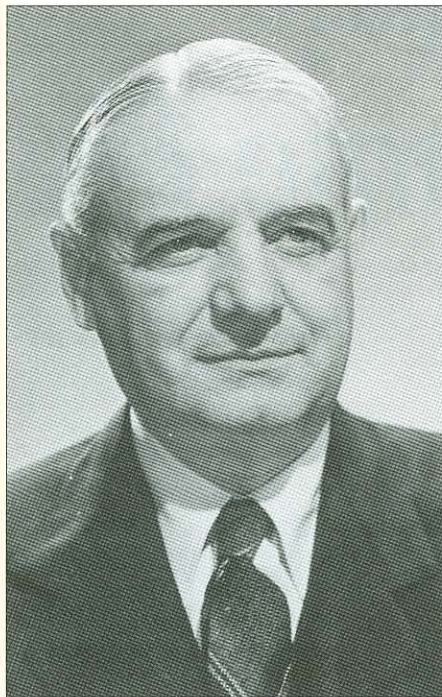


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COI Came First





William J. Donovan

Before World War II, the US Government traditionally left intelligence to the principal executors of American foreign policy, the Department of State and the armed services. Attachés and diplomats collected the bulk of America's foreign intelligence, mostly in the course of official business but occasionally in clandestine

meetings with secret contacts. In Washington, desk officers scrutinized their reports in the regional bureaus and the military intelligence services (the Office of Naval Intelligence [ONI] and the War Department's Military Intelligence Division, better known as the G-2). Important and timely information went up the chain of command, perhaps even to the President, and might be shared across departmental lines, but no one short of the White House tried to collate and assess all the vital information acquired by the US government. State and the military developed their own security and counterintelligence procedures, and the Army and Navy created separate offices to decipher and read foreign communications. Senior diplomat Robert Murphy later reflected "it must be confessed that our Intelligence organization in 1940 was primitive and inadequate. It was timid, parochial, and operating strictly in the tradition of the Spanish-American War."

As another European war loomed in the late 1930s, fears of fascist and Communist "Fifth Columns" in America prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to ask for greater coordination by the departmental intelligence arms. When little seemed to happen in response to his

wish, he tried again in the spring of 1941, expressing his desire to make the traditional intelligence services take a strategic approach to the nation's challenges—and to cooperate so that he did not have to arbitrate their squabbles. A few weeks later, Roosevelt in frustration resorted to a characteristic stratagem. With some subtle prompting from a pair of British officials—Admiral John H. Godfrey and William Stephenson (later Sir William)—FDR created a new organization to duplicate some of the functions of the existing agencies. The President on 11 July 1941 appointed William J. Donovan of New York to sort the mess as the Coordinator of Information (COI), the head of a new, civilian office attached to the White House.

The office of the Coordinator of Information constituted the nation's first peacetime, nondepartmental intelligence organization. President Roosevelt authorized it to

collect and analyze all information and data, which may bear upon national security: to correlate such information and data, and to make such information and data available to the President and to such departments and officials of the Government as the President may determine; and to carry out, when requested by the President, such supplementary activities as may facilitate the securing of information important for national security not now available to the Government.

“Wild Bill” Donovan

“OSS was a direct reflection of Donovan’s character. He was its spark plug, the moving force behind it. In a sense it can be said that Donovan was OSS.”

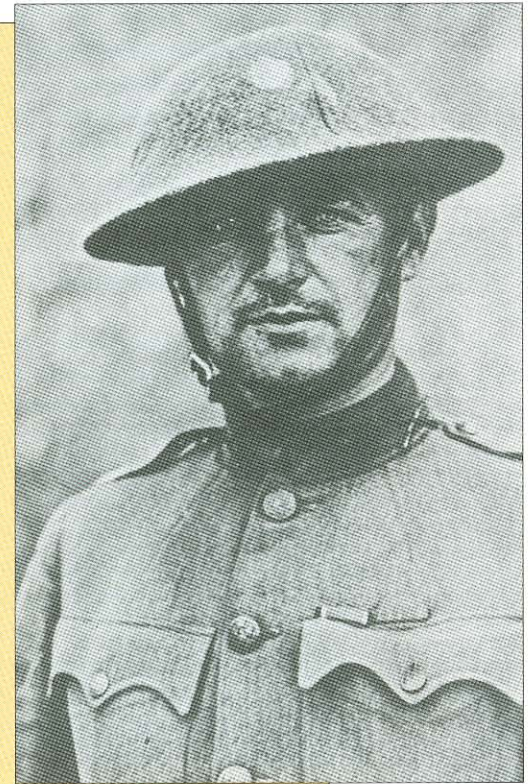
Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *Sub Rosa* (1946)

In selecting William J. Donovan as his Coordinator of Information in July 1941, President Roosevelt chose an energetic civilian who shared his desire to do whatever it took to resist Nazism and the danger it posed to America. “Wild Bill” Donovan owned a sterling résumé, with distinguished military service, executive and legal experience, an abiding interest in foreign affairs, and a vision of the importance of “strategic” intelligence that colleagues found inspiring.

Donovan was a Buffalo, New York, native who had earned his law degree at Columbia. He joined the 165th Infantry Regiment (also called the “Fighting 69th” from its Civil War days) and earned a Medal of Honor as a battalion commander charging German lines in World War I. After the war he visited Europe, Siberia, and Japan, served as assistant attorney general in the Coolidge administration (briefly supervising a young J. Edgar Hoover and his new Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI]), practiced antitrust law in New York City, and lost the 1932 election as the Republican candidate for Governor of New York. His interest in world affairs never diminished. Nor did his zest for being where the action was; he even toured the Italian battlelines in Ethiopia in 1935. Donovan also made wide contacts in government and among public-spirited financial and legal figures in New York City: men like Frank Knox, David Bruce, and the Dulles brothers, Allen and John Foster.

When Frank Knox became FDR’s new Secretary of the Navy in 1940, he brought William Donovan to Roosevelt’s attention (FDR and Donovan had been classmates—although not companions—at Columbia Law School). That summer, Roosevelt confidentially asked Donovan to visit Britain and report on London’s resolve and its staying power against Hitler. Donovan’s British hosts understood his mission. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, hoping to win American support for Britain’s desperate war effort, ensured that Donovan saw everything he wanted, granting him extraordinary access to defense and intelligence secrets. Donovan also toured the Balkans and British outposts in the Mediterranean in early 1941. Roosevelt was impressed with Donovan’s reports and with his ideas on intelligence and its place in modern war. When the President decided to force the military and civilian services to cooperate on intelligence matters in the summer of 1941, Donovan was the man he tapped to perform this mission.

William J. Donovan happily accepted the challenge and set to work with typical charisma and zeal. When the war came to America at Pearl Harbor, however, Donovan wanted to command troops on the battlefield again and hoped to gain a commission in the US Army. His hopes were soon dashed. An automobile accident in the spring of 1942 aggravated an old war wound, and Donovan realized that he would never again hold a field command. Nevertheless, he eventually wore a general’s stars. As the Director of OSS and a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Donovan commanded thousands of service personnel, and it was deemed helpful to recommission him for the duration of the war. He was placed on active duty and promoted to Brigadier General in March 1943 and won promotion to Major General in November 1944.



*Colonel Donovan in
St. Mihiel, France,
September 1918*

COI, said historian Thomas F. Troy, was “a novel attempt in American history to organize research, intelligence, propaganda, subversion, and commando operations as a unified and essential feature of modern warfare; a ‘Fourth Arm’ of the military services.” The office grew quickly in the autumn before Pearl Harbor, with Donovan cheerfully accumulating various offices and staffs orphaned in their home departments.

One of Donovan’s hand-me-down units brought to COI a mission unforeseen even by him: espionage. Donovan had intended the clandestine intelligence gathering of his office to serve its analytical and propaganda branches; he had not originally sought to duplicate the foreign intelligence missions of the armed services. Nevertheless, it was the armed services, uncomfortable with the peacetime espionage mission, that persuaded COI in September 1941 to accept the small “undercover” intelligence branches of ONI and the G-2. Along with this acquisition, COI won authority to utilize “unvouchered” funds from the President’s emergency fund.

Unvouchered funds were the lifeblood of clandestine operations. They were granted by Congress to be spent at the personal responsibility of the President or one of his officers, and were not audited in detail—Donovan’s signature on a note attesting to their proper use sufficed for accounting purposes. These funds, combined with the espionage authority granted COI by the military, planted the seed of the modern CIA’s Directorate of Operations.

Donovan recruited Americans who traveled abroad or studied world affairs and, in that age, such people often represented “the best and the brightest” at East Coast universities, businesses, and law firms. As war against Hitler loomed, not a few of America’s leading citizens looked for opportunities to join the struggle against Nazism. (COI’s successor, OSS, eventually drew such a high proportion of socially prominent men and women that Washington wits dubbed it “Oh So Social.”) These recruits brought into COI the practices and disciplines of their academic and legal backgrounds.

Donovan himself had traveled widely since his Army service in World War I, and he had been a careful observer of social, political, and military conditions. Similarly,

his legal briefs on behalf of corporate clients were patiently and voluminously documented. As Coordinator of Information, he saw an opportunity to make research a cornerstone of his new information agency. Donovan won cooperation from the Librarian of Congress (the poet Archibald MacLeish) for his plan to analyze Axis strengths and vulnerabilities. At roughly the same time, COI established its own Research and Analysis Branch (R&A) to test Donovan’s hypothesis that answers to many intelligence problems could be found in libraries, newspapers, and the filing cabinets of government and industry:

We have, scattered throughout the various departments of our government, documents and memoranda concerning military and naval and air and economic potentials of the Axis which, if gathered together and studied in detail by carefully selected trained minds, with a knowledge both of the related languages and technique, would yield valuable and often decisive results.

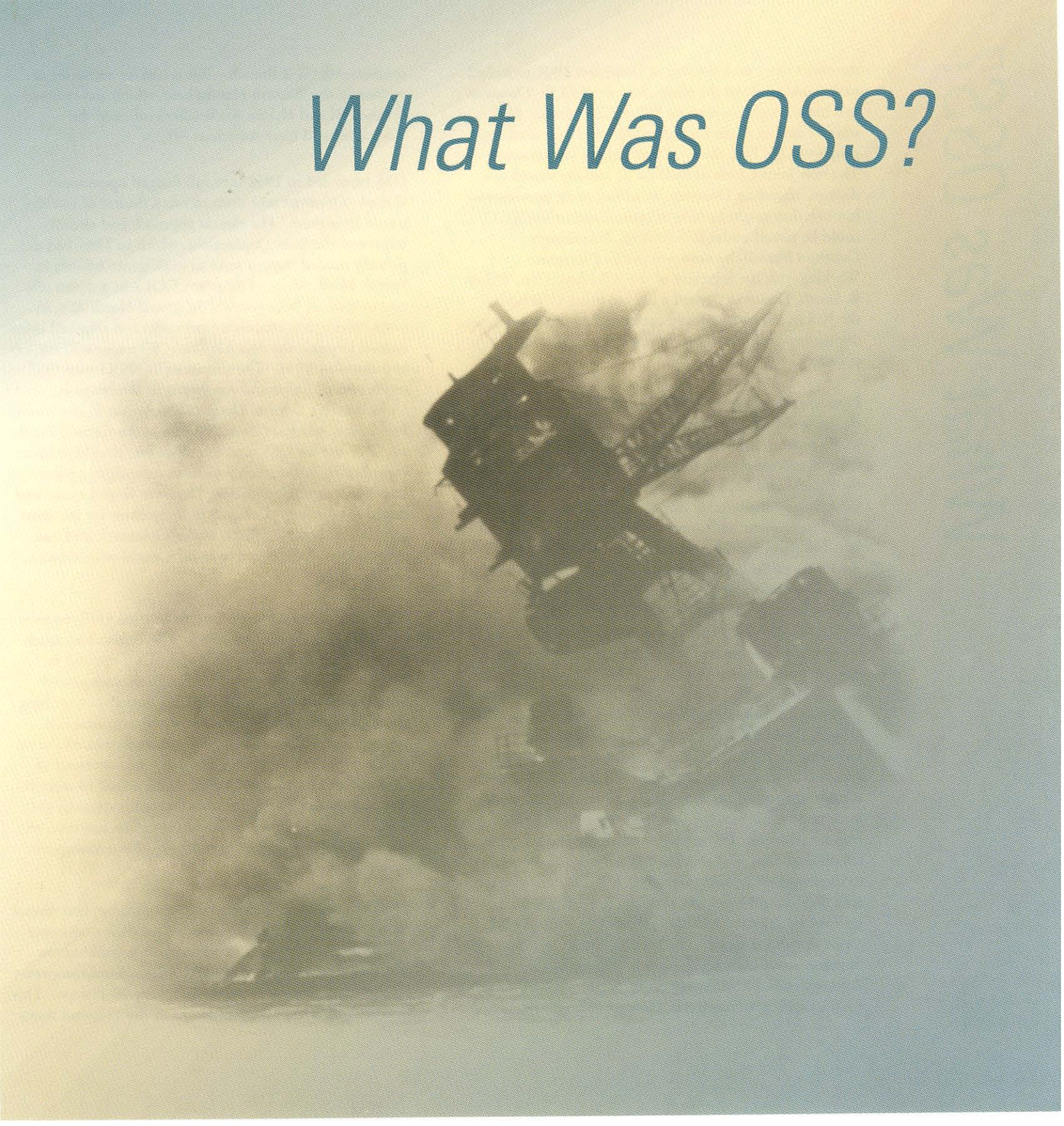
By autumn 1941, Donovan was proudly submitting the first of R&A’s meticulously prepared studies to President Roosevelt. The Branch was still small and focused on Europe at the time of Pearl Harbor, however, and it had no role in the operational and intelligence failures surrounding that disaster.



The background of the page features a soft, painterly illustration. It depicts several large, light-colored umbrellas, possibly made of paper or fabric, which are slightly translucent. Behind these umbrellas, the faint silhouettes of people can be seen, suggesting a group of people gathered outdoors. The overall color palette is a mix of pale blues, greens, and yellows, creating a calm and airy atmosphere. The text is centered in a simple, brown, sans-serif font.

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What Was OSS?



America's entry into the war in December 1941 provoked new thinking about the place and role of COI. Donovan and his new office—with its \$10 million budget, 600 staffers, and its charismatic director—had provoked hostility from the FBI, the G-2, and various war agencies. The new Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) initially shared this distrust, regarding Donovan, a civilian, as an interloper—but one they might be able to control and utilize if COI could be placed under JCS control. Surprisingly, Donovan himself, by now, was inclined to agree. Working with the Secretary of the JCS, Brig. Gen. Walter B. Smith, Donovan devised a plan to bring COI under the JCS in a way that would preserve the office's autonomy while winning it access to military support and resources.

President Roosevelt endorsed the idea of moving COI to the Joint Chiefs. The President, however, wanted to keep COI's Foreign Information Service (which conducted radio broadcasting) out of military hands. Thus he split the "black" and "white" propaganda missions, giving FIS the officially attributable side of the business—and half of COI's permanent staff—and sent it to the new Office of War Information. The remainder of COI then became the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) on 13 June 1942. The change of name to OSS marked the loss of the "white" propaganda mission, but it also fulfilled Donovan's wish for a title that reflected his sense of the "strategic" importance of intelligence and clandestine operations in modern war.

A month later, OSS's institutional rivals delivered another blow to Donovan's aspirations for the new outfit. The Department of State and the armed services arranged a Presidential decree that effectively banned OSS and several other agencies from acquiring and decoding the war's most important intelligence source: intercepted Axis communications. Donovan protested, but his complaints fell on deaf ears. The result was that OSS had no access to intercepts on Japan (codenamed MAGIC) and could read only certain types of German intercepts (called ULTRA by the Allies). Other edicts also limited OSS's scope and effectiveness. The FBI, G-2 and ONI, for instance, stood together to protect their monopoly on domestic counterintelligence work. OSS eventually developed a capable counterintelligence apparatus of its own

overseas—the X-2 Branch—but it had no authority to operate in the Western Hemisphere, which was reserved for the FBI and Nelson Rockefeller's office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

OSS expanded in 1942 into full-fledged operations abroad. Donovan sent units to every theater of war that would have them. His can-do approach had already impressed the State Department, which in 1941 had desperately needed men to serve as intelligence officers in French North Africa. Donovan's COI sent a dozen officers to work as "vice consuls" in several North African ports, where they established networks and acquired information to guide the Allied landings (Operation TORCH) in November 1942. The success of TORCH won OSS much needed praise and supporters in Washington. Unfortunately, General Douglas MacArthur in the South Pacific and Admiral Chester Nimitz in the Central Pacific saw little use for OSS, and the office was thus kept from contributing to the main American campaigns against Imperial Japan. Nonetheless, Donovan forged ahead and hoped for the best. Utilizing military cover for the most part, but with some officers under diplomatic and non-official cover, OSS began to build a world-wide clandestine capability.

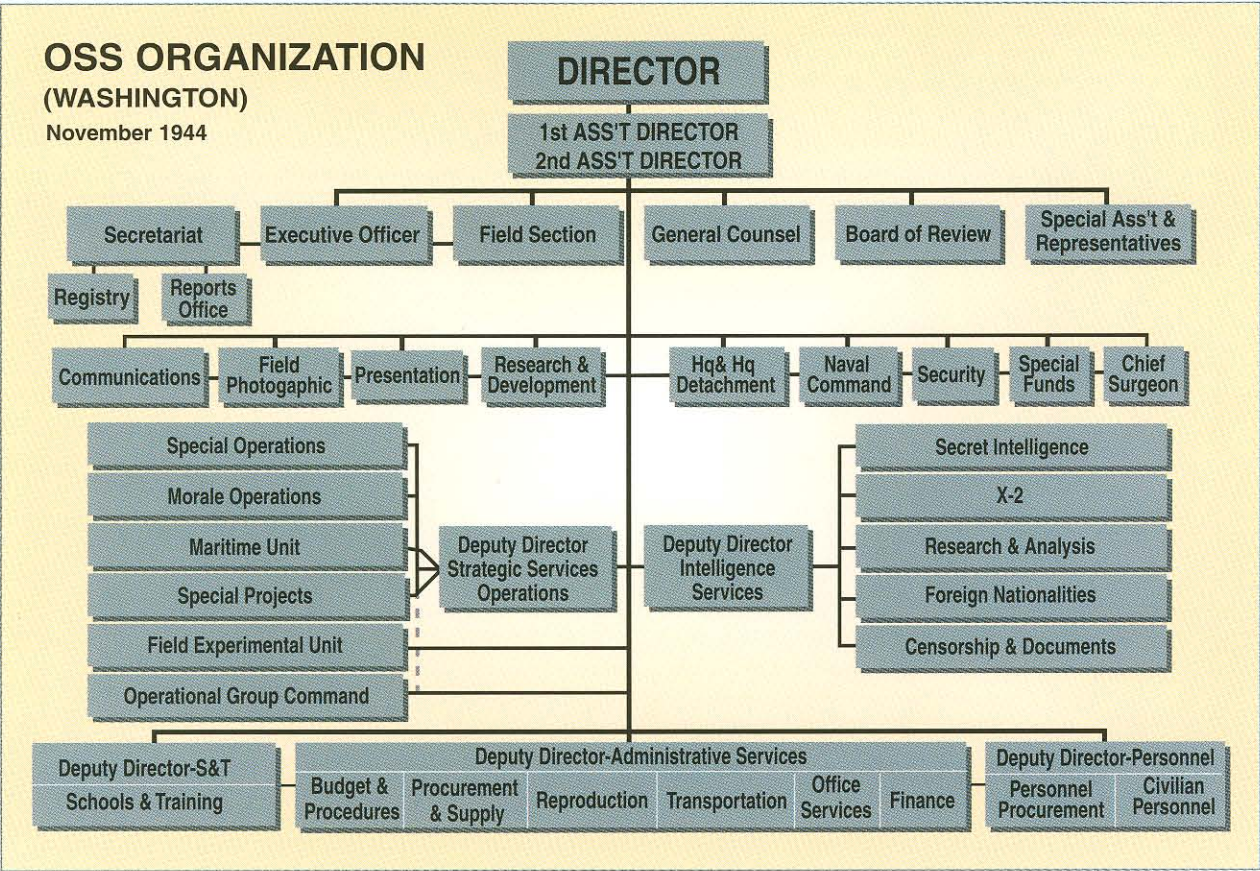
This worldwide reach benefited from close OSS contacts with British intelligence services. The British had much to teach their American pupils when COI opened its London office in November 1941. Both sides gained from the partnership. OSS needed information, training, and experience, all of which the British organizations could provide. The British good-naturedly envied the relative wealth of resources seemingly at the command of OSS and other American agencies and hoped to share in that bounty to expand their own operations against the Axis. Despite a mutual desire to cooperate, however, relative harmony between OSS and its British counterparts took time to achieve.

The slow maturing of inter-Allied cooperation had several causes. British intelligence services had their own operations and plans to protect and feared that working too closely with the inexperienced Americans would jeopardize the safety of their operatives in occupied Europe. This British caution kept the Americans in the awkward status

of junior partners for much of the war, particularly during the planning for covert action in support of the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944. For their part, OSS officers worried about making their new agency dependent on even a friendly foreign intelligence service. Conflicting policy goals occasionally hampered liaison with the British services in Asia. American diplomacy quietly frowned on British imperialism, and some OSS officers informally opposed British moves they viewed as efforts to expand the Empire. Despite these obstacles, however, the liaison relationship gradually grew closer as shared sacrifices and common goals forced officers in the field and in their respective headquarters to resolve their differences.

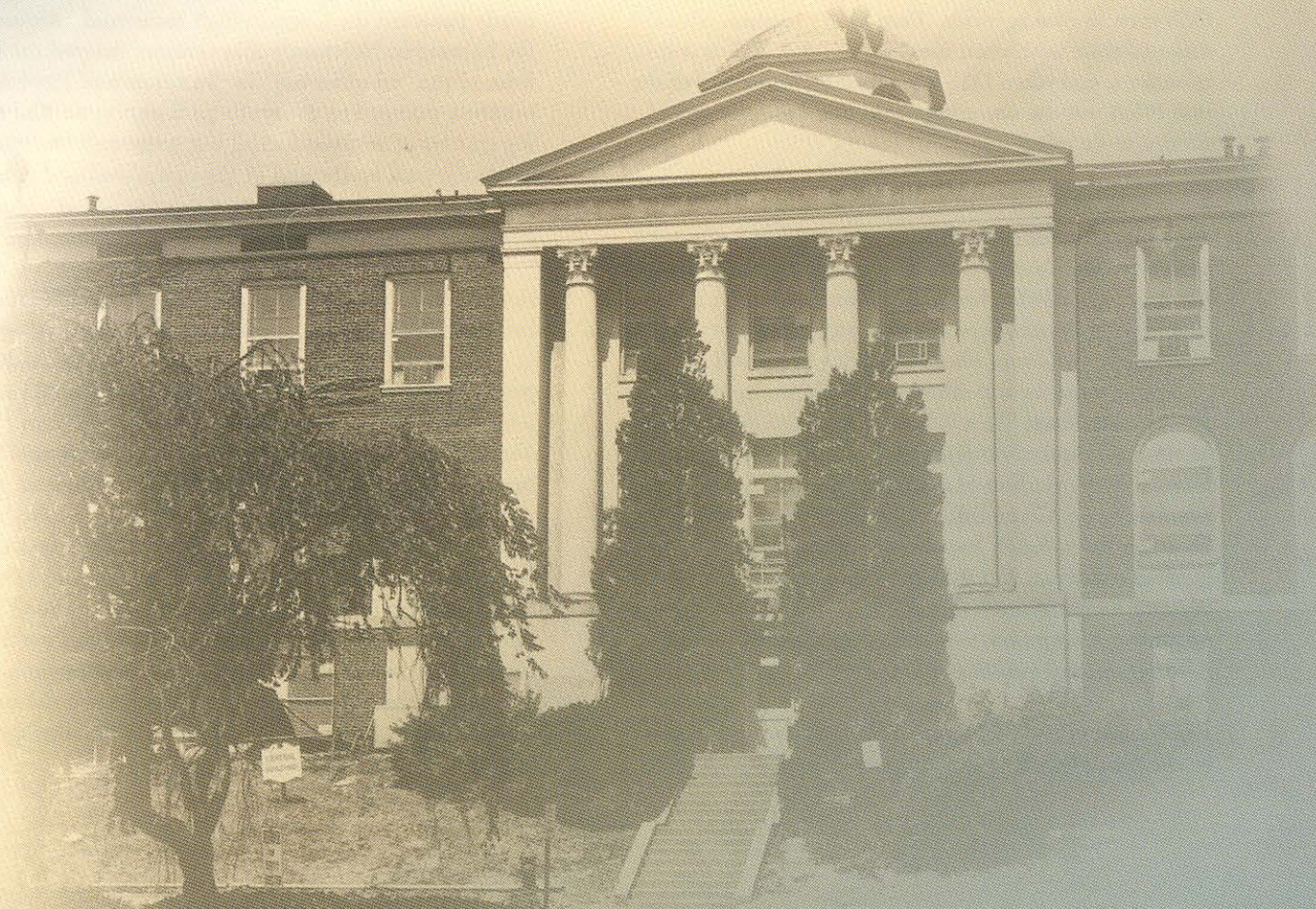
At its peak in late 1944, OSS employed almost 13,000 men and women. In relative terms, it was a little smaller than a US Army infantry division or a war agency like

the Office of Price Administration, which governed prices for many commodities and products in the civilian economy. General Donovan employed thousands of officers and enlisted men seconded from the armed services, and he also found military slots for many of the people who came to OSS as civilians. US Army (and Army Air Forces) personnel comprised about two-thirds of its strength, with civilians from all walks of life making up another quarter; the remainder were from the Navy, Marines, or Coast Guard. About 7,500 OSS employees served overseas, and about 4,500 were women (with 900 of them serving in overseas postings). In Fiscal Year 1945, the office spent \$43 million, bringing its total spending over its four-year life to around \$135 million (almost \$1.1 billion in today's dollars).



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Research & Analysis



American academics and experts in the Office of Strategic Services virtually invented the discipline of non-departmental strategic intelligence analysis—one of America's few unique contributions to the craft of intelligence. Inspired by General Donovan's vision of a service that could collate data from open sources and all departments of the government, analysts in OSS's Research and Analysis Branch (R&A) comprised a formidable intelligence resource. Although the Branch suffered its share of internal bickering and sometimes had trouble finding customers for its reports, R&A's experts made allies for OSS even in rival agencies. Even OSS's harshest critics softened their tone when speaking of R&A and its contributions, and when OSS was dissolved at the end of the war, R&A was the one component that everyone agreed needed to be saved.

Headed by Harvard historian William Langer, R&A assembled roughly 900 scholars. Staffing R&A was not a problem. The Branch recruited from many disciplines, but especially favored historians, economists, political scientists, geographers, psychologists, anthropologists, and diplomats. Professors all over America welcomed the chance to serve the war effort with their academic skills. R&A's roster reads like a Who's Who of two generations of scholars: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Walt W. Rostow, Edward Shils, Herbert Marcuse, H. Stuart Hughes, Gordon Craig, Crane Brinton, John King Fairbank, Sherman Kent, Ralph Bunche, and a host of distinguished colleagues and students joined the Branch. R&A veterans included seven future presidents of the American Historical Association, five of the American Economic Association, and two Nobel Laureates.

R&A made one of its biggest contributions in its support to the Allied bombing campaign in Europe. Analyses by

the Enemy Objectives Unit (EOU), a team of R&A economists posted to the US Embassy in London, sent Allied bombers toward German fighter aircraft factories in 1943 and early 1944. After the Luftwaffe's interceptor force was weakened, Allied bombers could strike German oil production, which EOU identified as the choke-point in the Nazi war effort. The idea was not original with OSS, but R&A's well-documented support gave it credibility and helped convince Allied commanders to try it. When American bombers began hitting synthetic fuel plants, ULTRA intercepts quickly confirmed that the strikes had nearly panicked the German high command. Although the fighting in Normandy that summer delayed the full force of the "oil offensive," in the autumn of 1944 Allied bombers returned to the synthetic fuel plants. The resulting scarcity of aviation fuel all but grounded Hitler's Luftwaffe and, by the end of the year, diesel and gasoline production had also plummeted, immobilizing thousands of German tanks and trucks.

R&A's contribution notwithstanding, the coordination of intelligence remained a problem in Washington throughout the war. The Pearl Harbor disaster underscored the problems with inter-service cooperation and could serve as a metaphor for the fragmentation of the American wartime intelligence establishment. The Army and Navy signals intelligence organizations barely cooperated, jealously guarding their reports and their access to President Roosevelt. They also prevented R&A analysts (with the exception of a few in the Enemy Objectives Unit) from reading signals intelligence at all. Outside of the Oval Office, no one collated and analyzed the totality of the intelligence data collected by the US Government. This lack of government-wide coordination limited the success of R&A and prompted efforts to reform the intelligence establishment as soon as the war was won.



Bombs from 8th Air Force B-17s smash the FW-190 fighter plant at Marienburg, East Prussia, on 9 October 1943. R&A's Enemy Objectives Unit worked with British and Polish intelligence to locate the factory.



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Special Operations



Special Operations

The Special Operations Branch (SO) of OSS ran guerrilla campaigns in Europe and Asia. As with many other facets of OSS's work, the organization and doctrine of the Branch was guided by British experiences in the growing field of "psychological warfare." British strategists in the year between the fall of France in 1940 and Germany's invasion of the USSR in 1941 had wondered how Britain—which then lacked the strength to force a landing on the European continent—could weaken the Reich and ultimately defeat Hitler. London chose a three-part strategy to utilize the only means at hand: naval blockade, sustained aerial bombing, and "subversion" of Nazi rule in the occupied nations. A civilian body, the Special Operations Executive (SOE), took command of the latter mission and began planning to "set Europe ablaze." This emphasis on guerrilla warfare and sabotage fit with William Donovan's vision of an offensive in depth, in which saboteurs, guerrillas, commandos, and agents behind enemy lines would support the army's advance. OSS thus seemed the natural point of contact and cooperation with SOE in combined planning and operations when the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff decided in 1942 that America would join Britain in the business of "subversion."

The Special Operations Branch served as SOE's American partner. Together, SO and SOE created the famous "Jedburgh" teams parachuted into France in the summer of 1944 to support the Normandy landings. Jedburghs joined the French Resistance against the German occupiers. There were 93 three-man teams in all, each of them with two officers and an enlisted radio operator. Typically an OSS man would serve with a British officer and a radioman from the Free French forces loyal to General Charles de Gaulle. Trained as commandos at SOE's Milton Hall in the English countryside, they were a colorful and capable lot that included adventurers and soldiers of fortune, as well as author Stewart Alsop and future Director of Central Intelligence William Colby. Officers trained alongside enlisted men in informal comradeship because, once inside France, rank would have to be secondary to courage and ability. After landing (hopefully into the arms of the Resistance) the teams coordinated airdrops of arms and supplies, guided the partisans on hit-and-run attacks and sabotage, and did their best to assist the advancing Allied armies.

Some of the passports issued to Virginia Hall during her OSS career.



Virginia Hall

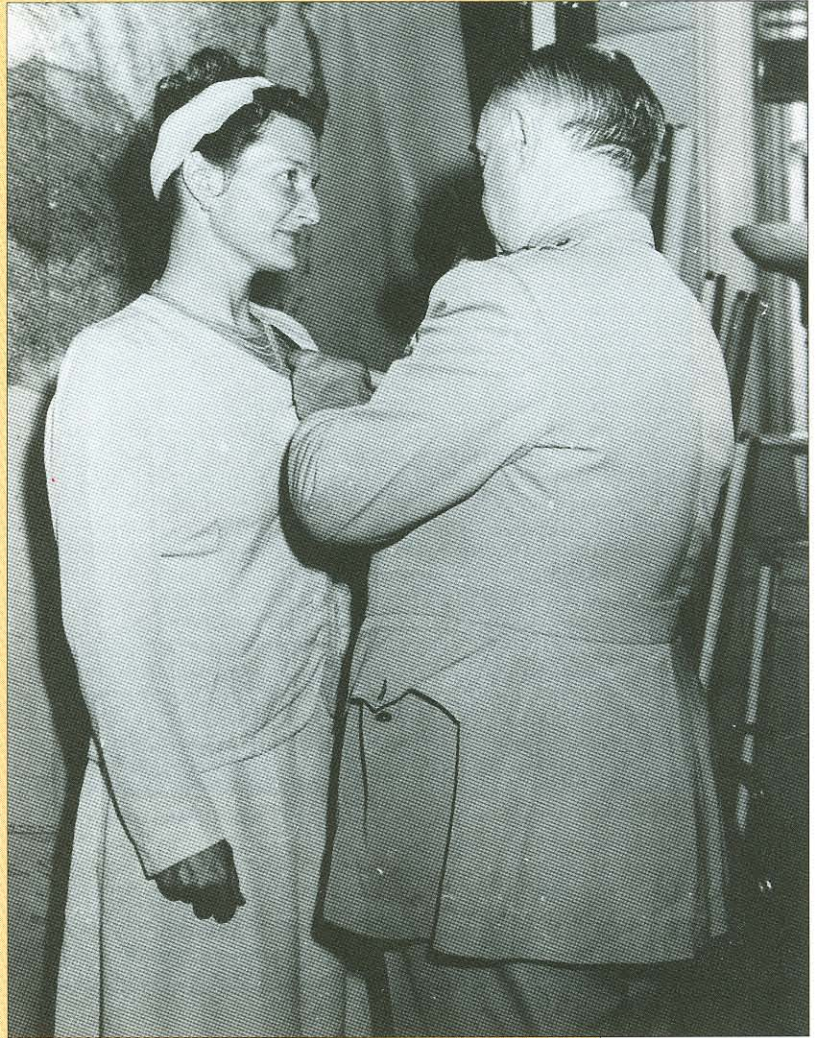
The story of Special Operations' Virginia Hall reads like a spy thriller. After spending more than a year working secretly for British intelligence in Vichy France, she joined OSS and volunteered for another mission in German-occupied territory. Hall not only survived but prospered, helping to organize French partisan groups and earning decorations from Britain and the United States.

Virginia Hall grew up in comfortable circumstances in Baltimore. She attended the best schools and colleges, but wanted to finish her studies in Europe. With help from her parents, she traveled the Continent and studied in France, Germany, and Austria, finally landing an appointment as a Consular Service clerk at the American Embassy in Warsaw in 1931. Hall hoped to join the Foreign Service, but suffered a terrible setback two years later when she lost her lower left leg in a hunting accident. The injury foreclosed whatever chance she might have had for a diplomatic career, and she resigned from the Department of State in 1939.

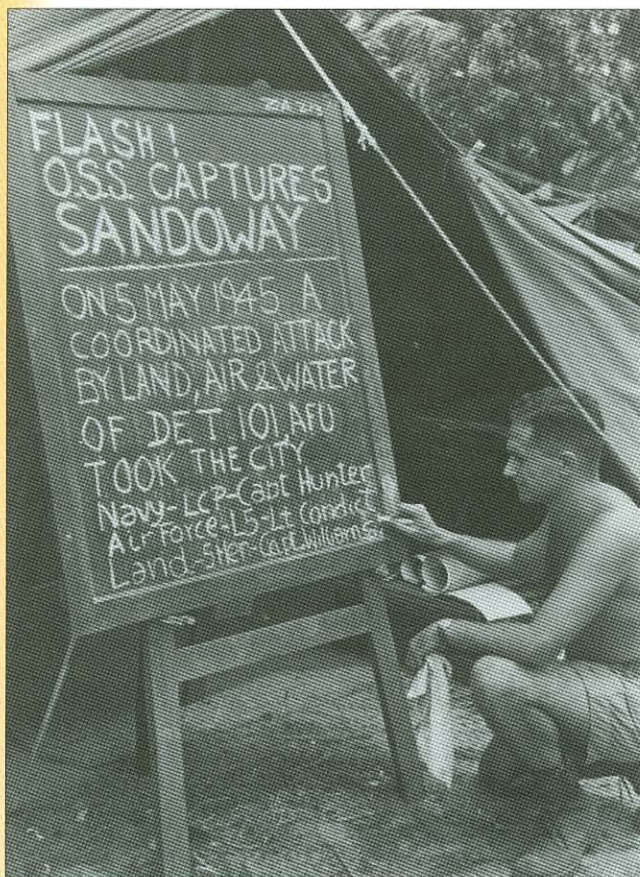
The coming of war that year found Hall in Paris. She joined the Ambulance Service before the fall of France and ended up in Vichy-controlled territory when the fighting stopped in the summer of 1940. Hall made her way to London and volunteered for Britain's newly formed Special Operations Executive, which sent her back to Vichy in August 1941. She spent the next 15 months there, helping to coordinate the activities of the underground in Vichy and the occupied zone of France. When the Germans suddenly seized all of France in November 1942, Hall barely escaped to Spain. Journeying back to London (after working for SOE for a time in Madrid), she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire by order of King George VI.

Virginia Hall joined OSS's Special Operations Branch in March 1944 and asked to return to occupied France. She hardly needed training in clandestine work behind enemy lines, and OSS promptly granted her request and landed her from a British PT boat in Brittany (her artificial leg kept her from parachuting in). As "Diane," she eluded the Gestapo and contacted the Resistance in central France. She mapped drop zones for supplies and commandos from England, found safe houses, and linked up with a Jedburgh team after the Allies landed at Normandy. Hall helped train three battalions of Resistance forces to wage guerrilla warfare against the Germans and kept up a stream of valuable reporting until Allied troops overtook her small band in September.

For her efforts in France, General Donovan in September 1945 personally awarded Virginia Hall a Distinguished Service Cross—the only one awarded to a civilian woman in World War II.



*Virginia Hall of
Special Operations
Branch receiving the
Distinguished Service
Cross from
General Donovan,
September 1945.*



Posting the news at Kyaukpyu Camp, Burma.

In Burma, OSS's Detachment 101 came perhaps the closest to realizing General Donovan's original vision of "strategic" support to regular combat operations. Under the initial leadership of "the most dangerous colonel," Carl Eifler, Detachment 101 took time to develop its capabilities and relationships with native guides and agents. Within a year, however, the Detachment and its thousands of cooperating Kachin tribesmen were gleaned valuable intelligence from jungle sites behind Japanese lines. With barely 120 Americans at any one time, the unit eventually recruited almost 11,000 native Kachins to fight the Japanese occupiers. When Allied troops invaded Burma in 1944, Detachment 101 teams advanced well ahead of the combat formations, gathering intelligence, sowing rumors, sabotaging key installations, rescuing downed Allied fliers, and snuffing out isolated Japanese

positions. Detachment 101 received the Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation for its service in the 1945 offensive that liberated Rangoon.

Significant parts of OSS's paramilitary and psychological capabilities worked outside of the Special Operations Branch. In late 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized OSS to run American commando units behind enemy lines. OSS promptly formed several "Operational Groups" to conduct these missions. These were small formations of specially trained US Army soldiers—many recruited from ethnic communities in America—who fought in uniform and had no obvious connection to OSS (so they would be less likely to be shot as spies if captured). Designated the 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion, Separate (Provisional) in 1944, Operational Groups fought in France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Burma, Malaya, and China, usually alongside partisan formations.

The Morale Operations Branch (MO) split from SO in 1943 to perform the "black" propaganda mission left behind in OSS when COI had been split the previous year. "Black" propaganda was supposed to look like it came from Germans or Japanese who were disgruntled with the war. It was intended to lower the morale of Axis troops and increase civilian resistance to the regimes in Berlin and Tokyo. In yet another example of the ways in which OSS organized itself to mirror British agencies, MO paralleled and worked with the Foreign Office's Political Warfare Executive. MO took more than a year to find its niche in OSS and the Washington wartime bureaucracy, but by mid-1944 it was functioning effectively. Eventually MO's early critics came to value its services, which included rumors about Hitler's health and sanity, vast quantities of subversive leaflets, stickers, and slogans, and fake German newspapers and radio broadcasts (featuring, for instance, Marlene Dietrich singing "Lilli Marlene"). By the end of the war, MO and its companion civilian and military agencies had convinced policymakers in Washington that modern wars need to be fought in the "psychological" as well as military and economic arenas.



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Secret Intelligence



William J. Donovan in 1941 had not intended his new intelligence service to become a “spy” agency, running espionage operations in foreign capitals. He wanted COI to support military operations in the field by providing research, propaganda, and commando support, but he quickly became convinced of the value of clandestine human reporting. In 1942 OSS established the Secret Intelligence Branch (SI) to open field stations, train case officers, run agent operations, and process reports in Washington. Headed from 1943 on by international executive and lawyer Whitney H. Shepardson, SI by the end of the war had become a full-fledged foreign intelligence service, with stations in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, excellent liaison contacts with foreign services, and a growing body of operational doctrine.

In November 1942, the most famous SI station chief, Allen W. Dulles, set up shop on “Hitler’s doorstep” in the American legation in Bern, Switzerland. He found there a complicated and ever-shifting scene. Dulles quickly adopted a remnant of the fine prewar French military intelligence service, which gratefully provided him reports on German deployments in France that were prized by Allied invasion planners. He also found that Allied agents sent into Nazi Germany had scant hope of eluding the Gestapo, but that travel between the Reich and neutral Switzerland was free enough to bring a variety of Germans to him. Dulles established wide contacts with German émigrés, resistance figures, and anti-Nazi intelligence officers (who linked him, through Hans Bernd Gisevius, to the tiny but daring opposition to Hitler in Germany itself). Although Washington barred Dulles from making firm commitments to the plotters of the 20 July 1944 attempt to assassinate Hitler, the conspirators nonetheless gave him reports on developments in Germany, including sketchy but accurate warnings of plans for Hitler’s V-1 and V-2 missiles. In addition, Dulles was contacted by a German Foreign Ministry official, Fritz Kolbe, who volunteered to report from Berlin. Kolbe’s periodic packets illuminated German foreign policy and military matters, and helped the British spot the German spy “Cicero” working in the household of the British ambassador to Turkey.

Secret Intelligence Branch operations by 1945 had extended beyond the running of operations in foreign capitals to encompass the actual penetration of Nazi Germany. Donovan wanted to replicate the successes that the SI mission in Algiers had had in running the “Penny-Farthing” network in Southern France, but Germany, with no organized Resistance, was a much tougher objective. SI’s mission in London, led by William J. Casey, found a solution by adopting the methods of a successful OSS Morale Operations Branch project in Italy. Casey’s unit—knowing that no Americans could survive in Hitler’s Germany—learned how to find “volunteer” agents among the thousands of Axis prisoners-of-war in England. Casey’s London SI trained the agents, provided them with meticulously prepared clothing, documentation, and equipment, and dropped nearly 200 of them into the Third Reich to gather intelligence in the last months of the war. Agent teams established themselves in Bremen, Munich, Mainz, Dusseldorf, Essen, Stuttgart, and Vienna—and even in Berlin. They paid a high price in casualties—36 were killed, captured, or missing at war’s end—but the data they collected on industrial and military targets significantly aided the final Allied air and ground assaults on Germany.

Allen W. Dulles

Allen Dulles was born to high affairs of state. The nephew of one Secretary of State and the grandson of another, he was graduated from Princeton and joined the Foreign Service in World War I. As a junior diplomat, he acquired a taste for intelligence work while serving in Vienna and—after America declared war—in the American Legation in Bern, Switzerland. He gained valuable experiences, one of which stuck with him for the rest of his life. In Bern in 1917, Dulles kept a tennis date with a young lady one Sunday morning instead of meeting with an obscure Russian revolutionary named Lenin. Ever afterward he insisted that anyone who knocked on a case officer's door deserved at least a hearing.

Dulles kept his career focused on foreign affairs after the war. Allen and his brother John Foster advised their uncle, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, at the Paris Peace negotiations at Versailles. More diplomatic postings followed in Berlin and Constantinople before Dulles returned to the State Department to head the Division of Near Eastern Affairs. He resigned from the government in 1926 to practice law and, for the next 15 years, he practiced with the firm of Sullivan & Cromwell in New York. Like his acquaintance William J. Donovan, Dulles traveled frequently abroad for business and pleasure in the 1930s, meeting Hitler and Mussolini and other European leaders in the course of his journeys. He joined the Council on Foreign Relations, ran as a Republican for Congress (and lost) in 1938, and advised former colleagues in the Department of State.

An early foe of Hitler, Dulles joined the fight against Nazi Germany well before Pearl Harbor. He had persuaded Sullivan & Cromwell to close its Berlin office in 1935. As head of COI's New York office in the autumn of 1941, Dulles worked with William Stephenson ("Intrepid") of British Security Coordination and gathered data on the Axis from refugees and from American businessmen and journalists with ties in Europe. His long institutional experience and wide contacts superbly equipped him to run wartime intelligence operations out of neutral Switzerland, and Dulles made the most of his many opportunities in Bern.



Allen W. Dulles in Bern, Switzerland.



Crew members of a B-24 bomber flown by OSS on special missions over Central Europe pose beside their plane at Area T.

As defeat loomed for the Third Reich in the spring of 1945, Allen Dulles and SI made one of OSS's greatest contributions to the war effort. German generals and officials as high-ranking as SS chief Heinrich Himmler began floating secret peace proposals to the British and the Americans. While some of these offers were genuine, the Allied "unconditional surrender" policy—and fear of provoking the suspicions of Joseph Stalin—constrained American diplomats and intelligence officers who might otherwise have been able to encourage these peace feelers. One important exception was made. Despite the unconditional surrender policy, higher authority in Washington allowed Allen Dulles to meet with SS general Karl Wolff, who had secretly offered to broker a surrender of German forces in Italy. The result of the meetings was Operation

SUNRISE, a dangerous and devilishly complicated series of contacts over the next several weeks. Dulles had to manage the contacts and negotiations from Bern. Time after time the scheme came right to the edge of breakdown or disaster, but in the end SUNRISE succeeded, bringing about an early end to the Italian campaign in late April 1945—and saving hundreds if not thousands of lives.

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X-2



SILENCE

MEANS SECURITY



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Any appraisal of the Office of Strategic Services must begin with the fact that the best intelligence available to British and American commanders came from intercepted and deciphered Axis messages. Without ULTRA and MAGIC, the war might have been lost. OSS shared in only a small portion of this intelligence bounty, chiefly because the Army and Navy (backed by the JCS) refused to give General Donovan a role in procuring or analyzing enemy signals. There was, however, an important exception to this ban. OSS's counterintelligence branch, X-2, made good use of German ULTRA intelligence and by the end of the war had established itself as a formidable practitioner of clandestine operations.

William Donovan created the X-2 Branch in early 1943 to provide British intelligence services with a liaison office in OSS for sharing ULTRA. Using ULTRA intercepts, the British security services had captured every German agent in the United Kingdom; some agents were even "doubled" to send a steady flow of plausible but bogus reports to Berlin. British intelligence wanted American help in this campaign, but London insisted that the Americans imitate British security practices to protect the vital ULTRA secret from unauthorized disclosures (even to other OSS personnel). X-2 was the Branch that resulted from this deal; it had its own overseas stations and communications channels and operated in partnership with the British foreign and domestic intelligence services.

Headed by attorney James Murphy, X-2 swiftly became an elite within an elite. Its officers possessed the secret keys to many wartime intelligence puzzles and could veto operations proposed by SO and SI without having to explain their reasons for doing so. In consequence, X-2 was able to attract some of the best talent in OSS, but it also earned a reputation for aloofness that the other OSS Branches resented. James J. Angleton, X-2 station chief in Rome for the last year of the war, proved a model of an innovative, activist counterintelligence officer whose contributions exceeded his job description. He cultivated Italian liaison contacts (hitherto shunned as former enemies by the other Allied agencies), reported on political machinations in Rome, and devised ways to make ULTRA information usable by US Army counterintelligence officers who were not cleared to see the actual intercepts.

X-2 did well in Europe, but OSS headquarters in Washington might have profited from more counterintelligence scrutiny. OSS had a dismal security reputation. Established agencies like the FBI and G-2 believed that Donovan's oddball outfit, built as it was from scratch with not a few corners cut in the hiring of its staff, had to be riddled with subversives and spies. This rap was not wholly fair; OSS headquarters was not in fact penetrated by Axis agents, and its field security (at least in Europe) was adequate. Nevertheless, X-2 hunted the agents of Axis—not Allied—services. Soviet sympathizers and even spies worked in OSS offices in Washington and the field. Some were hired precisely because they were Communists; Donovan wanted their help in dealing with partisan groups in Nazi-occupied Europe. Others who were not Communists, such as Donovan's aide Duncan C. Lee, R&A labor economist Donald Wheeler, MO Indonesia expert Jane Foster Zlatowski, and R&A Latin America specialist Maurice Halperin, nevertheless passed information to Moscow. OSS operations in China, moreover, were badly penetrated by Communist agents working as clerical and housekeeping staff, or training in OSS camps for operational missions.



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Weapons & Spy Gear



Weapons & Spy Gear

OSS activities created a steady demand for devices and documents that could be used to trick, attack, or demoralize the enemy. Finding few agencies or corporations willing to undertake this sort of low-volume, highly specialized work, General Donovan enthusiastically promoted an in-house capability to fabricate the tools that OSS needed for its clandestine missions. By the end of the war, OSS engineers and technicians had formed a collection of labs, workshops, and experts that occasionally gave OSS a technological edge over its Axis foes.

The Special Operations and Secret Intelligence Branches frequently called on the technical prowess assembled in the Research & Development Branch (R&D) and related offices. R&D proved adept at inventing weapons and gadgets and in adapting Allied equipment to new missions. General Donovan hired Boston chemist and executive Stanley P. Lovell to be his "Professor Moriarty" in charge of R&D. The Division's products ranged from silenced pistols to limpet mines to "Aunt Jemima," an allegedly explosive powder packaged in Chinese flour bags. Tiny cameras and inconspicuous letter-drops were devised to assist OSS agents in enemy territory. A companion unit, located in the Communications Branch but

This OSS "Beano" grenade exploded upon impact.



This uniform button is really a compass.



The easily concealed 'Liberator' pistol.



Caltrops were designed to puncture tires.



A deck of playing cards conceal a map which would be revealed when the top layer was soaked off.

also confusingly titled the Research and Development Division, developed wiretap devices, electronic beacons for agents in the field, and excellent portable radios (particularly the "Joan-Eleanor" system, which allowed an agent to converse securely with an aircraft circling high overhead).

R&D's components also fabricated the myriad papers that an agent needed to create a plausible identity behind enemy lines. The latest German and Japanese-issued ration cards, work passes, identification cards, and even occupation currency all had to be secretly acquired, perfectly imitated, and securely passed to operatives preparing for missions that could end in sudden death if any part of their cover stories went awry. An agent's appearance had to be just as carefully prepared. In the words of the OSS official history:

...each agent had to be equipped with clothing sewn exactly as it would have been sewn if it were made in the local area for which he was destined; his eyeglasses, dental work, toothbrush, razor, brief case, travelling bag, shoes, and every item of wearing apparel had to be microscopically accurate.

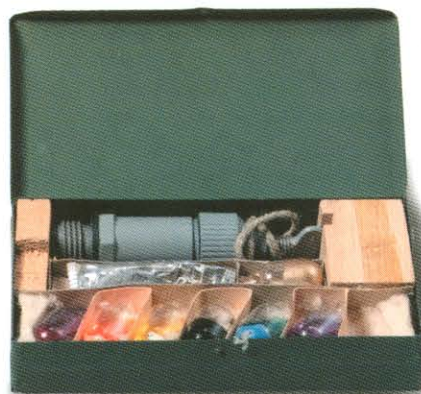
The growing number of OSS coastal infiltration and sabotage projects eventually gave rise to an independent branch, the Maritime Unit, to develop specialized boats, equipment, and explosives. The Unit fashioned underwater breathing gear, waterproof watches and compasses, an inflatable motorized surfboard, and a two-man kayak that proved so promising that 275 were ordered by the British.

Some OSS schemes had a Rube Goldberg feel about them that seems almost comical today. Project CAMPBELL, for instance, was a remote-controlled speedboat, disguised as a local fishing craft and guided by aircraft, that would detonate against an anchored Japanese ship. The prototype sank a derelict freighter in trials, but the US Navy had no way of getting close enough to a Japanese harbor to launch CAMPBELL, and declined to develop the weapon. R&D built plenty of devices of its own that looked good on paper but either failed in tests or proved too impractical for combat use. But America was locked in a war for its very survival, and R&D chief Stanley Lovell felt that no idea could be overlooked: "It was my

policy to consider any method whatever that might aid the war, however unorthodox or untried." Failures were accepted as a cost of doing business.



Maritime Unit personnel testing a two-man kayak.



Acetone Time Delay Fuses for limpet mines to be used against ships.



A 16mm Kodak camera in the shape of a matchbox.



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OSS in Asia



Office of Strategic Services: Missions and Bases in East Asia



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Apart from Detachment 101 in Burma, OSS did not contribute much to the struggle against Japan until the last year of the war. Early in the conflict, Army and Navy commanders excluded OSS from their sectors of the Pacific, thereby forcing Donovan to fight the Japanese in the only region left open to him, the distant China-Burma-India Theater. The difficult geography involved and the complicated relations with America's British and Chinese allies further delayed OSS's deployments. When OSS finally began operating in strength, however, its operations made an impact on both the Japanese and on the shape of post-war policies in the region.

OSS had a difficult time winning authority or access to prosecute operations in China. The Nationalist regime in Chungking was a government in name only; Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was more China's most powerful warlord than its national leader. He was fighting a war on two fronts—against the Japanese invaders on one side and against the Chinese Communists under Mao Zedong on the other. His secret police and intelligence chief, Tai Li, wanted American aid but had no intention of allowing Americans to operate independently on Chinese soil. American efforts to assist Chiang against the Japanese thus had to navigate a labyrinth of feuds and jealousies in Chungking before any implementation. Complicating matters still further, Tai Li demanded that American intelligence operations in China be run—wherever possible—by the office of Capt. Milton E. Miles, the commander of an unorthodox US Navy liaison unit.

Donovan in late 1943 personally told Tai Li that OSS would operate in China whether he liked it or not, but it still took a measure of subterfuge for Donovan's officers to win a role there. The problem was bigger than Tai Li. At least a dozen American intelligence units operated in China over the course of the war, all of them competing for sources, access, and resources. Ironically, Donovan and OSS eventually "thrived on chaos," according to historian Maochun Yu. OSS learned to provide services to American commanders that neither the Chinese nor other US organizations could match. Access and authorization followed in due course as OSS analysts and operatives proved that their methods materially assisted combat operations against the Japanese. For example, Gen. Claire L. Chennault, creator of the famous "Flying Tigers" and



OSS helped to train and equip Chinese guerrillas.

chief of US air power in China, needed accurate target intelligence. OSS filled his need through an "Air and Ground Forces Resources Technical Staff" (AGFRTS), and used this toe-hold to expand well beyond support for Chennault's squadrons at Kunming. When a new theater commander, Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, began cleaning house and asserting his authority over all US intelligence operations in China, OSS allied itself with him and transferred AGFRTS from 14th Air Force to theater headquarters.

Although it never attained Donovan's goal of full independence in China, OSS was a key player in operations and analysis there by the war's end. On 9 August 1945—the day that Nagasaki was destroyed by an atomic bomb—Maj. Paul Cyr, leading a team of Chinese guerrillas on "Mission Hound," dropped a strategic railroad bridge across the Yellow River near Kaifeng. Two spans of the bridge collapsed just as a Japanese troop train was crossing it. As soon as Japan capitulated, additional OSS teams ran "mercy missions" in Japanese-held territory to locate and evacuate Allied prisoners captured early in the war.

OSS plans and activities in China sparked inter-office arguments over US policy. China's seemingly intractable troubles and the vast suffering of its people long con-



Maj. Paul Cyr and Team Hound in training (courtesy of Robert Viau).

founded American policymakers. OSS officers who came aboard as China experts or sympathized with the Chinese people while serving there inevitably drew their own conclusions about the course of American diplomacy. Opinions in OSS ranged across the political spectrum, from admirers of Chiang in his struggles against Japanese invaders and Communist insurgents, to unabashed advocates of Communist leader Mao Zedong and his promise of justice for the peasantry through social revolution. Most OSS officers adhered to positions between these two poles, concerned about the dangers of Chinese Communism, but frustrated at the corruption of Chiang's regime and its reluctance to make reforms to increase the effectiveness of American aid and to broaden its popular base.

OSS officers in Thailand faced a different set of policy issues and demonstrated a high degree of teamwork in tackling them. Thailand had actually declared war on the United States and Great Britain after Pearl Harbor and was host to several Japanese bases. Washington had ignored Bangkok's declaration, however, when it became clear that a portion of the Thai ruling elite quietly opposed Japan and hoped to keep their nation from being drawn more deeply into the conflict. For the rest of the war the British, Americans, and Japanese danced a complicated minuet around the possibility that the Thai

opposition would rise against Japan and force Tokyo to divert badly needed combat troops to subjugating the country. Since the United States had no embassy in Bangkok, OSS officers eventually found themselves in the unlikely role of diplomats under the very noses of the Japanese troops guarding the city.

OSS efforts to contact the rumored Thai underground movement did not bear fruit until late 1944, after moderate opposition leaders in Bangkok ousted the dictatorship that had declared war on the Allies. Thai students recruited and trained by OSS (the "Free Thai") and the British



Detachment 404 officers in Jessore, India, planning a supply drop, June 1945.

SOE were able to meet with underground leaders and even to broadcast reports from secret locations. Encouraged by the sudden surge of reporting, General Donovan in January 1945 dispatched two OSS majors, Richard Greenlee and John Wester, on a mission to Bangkok. Hiding in a spare palace by day and working by night, Greenlee and Wester confirmed that the Thai underground was secretly led by the de facto head of state, Prince Regent Pridi Phanomyong (codenamed Ruth). Pridi and his followers provided intelligence on the Japanese and offered to rise up in revolt, but they needed arms and training which only SOE and OSS could provide. To complicate matters, Pridi and the Free Thai (as well as OSS observers) suspected that the British harbored imperial designs on Thailand. If Americans could build a Thai guerrilla force, OSS men on the scene believed, the Thais could harass the Japanese and bolster a postwar claim to independence from British tutelage.



A Royal Air Force Dakota supporting operations in Thailand had to be unstuck the old-fashioned way at a secret air strip in June 1945.

OSS officers promised American help for the projected Thai guerrillas. Back in Washington, the Department of State retroactively endorsed this commitment, which amounted to a change in US policy. In Bangkok, Greenlee, Wester, and their successors shuttled to meetings with Pridi and SOE in curtained limousines driven past the Japanese, who doubled their garrison in the country but dared not tear up the paper alliance between Thailand and Japan. The war ended in August 1945 before actual fighting broke out, but the diplomatic maneuvering continued. OSS officers close to the Thai peace delegation kept Washington informed of the course of Anglo-Thai peace talks and assisted American diplomats in advocating a settlement that ultimately helped ensure Thai independence.

In China and Thailand, OSS graduated from a reporter of events to a shaper of American foreign policy. In China, OSS demonstrated that an American intelligence service could not remain aloof from the exhausting policy debates in Washington over the wisdom and means of backing the incumbent regime. By contrast, OSS officers in Thailand

showed how much could be done through clandestine means to help a popular movement struggling against foreign domination.

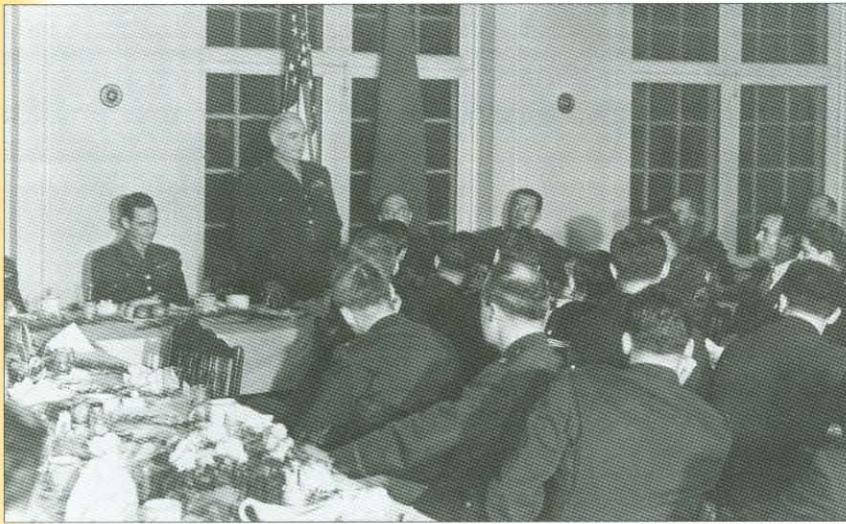
Both lessons would echo in the Cold War, especially when the United States became embroiled in the Vietnam War. Even there, the OSS left a small but significant legacy for US foreign policy. Against the wishes of America's French and Chinese allies, OSS "Mission DEER" had briefly aided Communist insurgent leader Ho Chi Minh in his fight against the Japanese in northern Indochina. Other OSS officers, such as Maj. Aaron Bank, arrived in Laos and in southern Vietnam as the war ended, and tried to make sense of the bewildering and violent nationalist and colonial rivalries among the French and Vietnamese factions there. OSS's Col. Peter Dewey in Saigon tragically became the first American killed in Indochina when his jeep was ambushed by Communist guerrillas (apparently in a case of mistaken identity) in September 1945.



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An End and a Beginning





General Donovan addressing Jedburghs in England, 1944.

OSS trained many of the leaders and personnel who formed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Their ranks included four future Directors of Central Intelligence: Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, William Colby, and William Casey. Ironically, however, the one OSS veteran who did the most to promote such an agency—William J. Donovan—did not make the transition to it. He had led from the front, visiting his troops and surveying the ground in England, France, Italy, Burma, China, and even Russia. General Donovan was a charismatic leader and empire builder who inspired his people, but he was also a mediocre administrator, enamored of operations but bored by procedural detail. Tales of OSS inefficiency and waste—some of them true—delighted Donovan's critics. He had tirelessly battled bureaucratic rivals in Washington and London, but as the war drew to an end his enemies began to fear that he might actually win his campaign to create a peacetime intelligence service modeled on OSS. President Roosevelt made no promises, however, and after his death in April 1945, the incoming President, Harry S. Truman, felt no obligation to save OSS.

Victory in Europe in May 1945 allowed OSS to concentrate on Japan, but it also meant months of bureaucratic limbo for Washington headquarters. President Truman disliked Donovan. Truman mocked him in his diary, per-

haps fearing that Donovan's proposed intelligence establishment might one day be used against Americans. The mood in Congress, moreover, was running against "war agencies" like OSS. Once the victory was won, the nation and Congress wanted demobilization—fast. This obstacle alone might have blocked a presidential attempt to preserve OSS or to create a permanent peacetime intelligence agency along the lines of General Donovan's plan.

The White House's Bureau of the Budget drafted liquidation plans for OSS and other war agencies, but initially the Bureau assumed that the termination could be stretched over weeks or months so OSS could preserve its most valuable assets. OSS and the Budget Bureau were to have less time than they expected. In late August, the White House suddenly ordered that OSS be closed as soon as possible. Bureau staffers had already conceived the idea of giving the Research and Analysis Branch to the State Department as "a going concern." The imminent dissolution of OSS meant that something now had to be done quickly about the rest of the office. In response, a Budget Bureau staffer decided that the War Department should receive the remainder of OSS "for salvage and liquidation." The War Department, it was decided, might even continue to operate the SI and X-2 Branches (and their overseas networks) for another year or so.

The Budget Bureau's plan for intelligence reorganization went to President Truman on 4 September 1945. Donovan protested the plan, but the President ignored him, telling the Bureau to proceed with "the dissolution of Donovan's outfit even if Donovan did not like it." Bureau staffers soon had the requisite papers ready for the President's signature. Executive Order 9621 on 20 September dissolved OSS as of 1 October 1945, sending R&A to the Department of State and everything else to the War Department. The Executive Order also directed the Secretary of War to liquidate OSS activities "whenever he deems it compatible with the national interest." That same day, President Truman sent a letter of appreciation to General Donovan. The transfer of R&A to State, wrote the President, marked "the beginning of the development of a coordinated system of foreign intelligence

within the permanent framework of the Government.” The President also implicitly affirmed that the War Department would continue to operate certain OSS components providing “services of a military nature the need for which will continue for some time.”

Due to an oversight in the drafting of EO 9621, Donovan had just ten days to dismantle his sprawling agency. He was too busy to do much about saving the components of OSS bound for the War Department. Donovan micro-filmed his office files and bade farewell to his troops at a 28 September rally in a converted skating rink down the hill from his headquarters at 2430 E Street, NW:

We have come to the end of an unusual experiment. This experiment was to determine whether a group of Americans constituting a cross section of racial origins, of abilities, temperaments and talents could meet and risk an encounter with the long-established and well-trained enemy organizations....You can go with the assurance that you have made a beginning in showing the people of America that only by decisions of national policy based upon accurate information can we have the chance of a peace that will endure.

OSS expired on 1 October 1945. Fortunately, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy had saved the SI and X-2 Branches as the nucleus of a peacetime intelligence service. McCloy was a friend of Donovan's, and he interpreted the President's directive as broadly as possible in ordering OSS's Deputy Director for Intelligence, Brig. Gen. John Magruder, to preserve SI and X-2 “as a going operation” in a new office that McCloy dubbed the “Strategic Services Unit” (SSU). Secretary of War Robert Patterson confirmed this directive and ordered Magruder to “preserve as a unit such of these functions and facilities as are valuable for permanent peacetime purposes.”

Within two years the President and the Congress found a new home for the personnel and assets saved in SSU under Col. William W. Quinn. They went to a new organization called the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) until the National Security Act of 1947 turned CIG into the Central Intelligence Agency, to perform many of the missions that General Donovan had advocated for his proposed peacetime intelligence service. Although CIA dif-

fered from OSS in important ways (which is why Truman endorsed it and not OSS), Donovan and his office deserve credit as forefathers of the Agency. Without Donovan's tireless advocacy of a modern intelligence service—and the record built by OSS during the war—the Truman administration would have taken longer to create the new intelligence establishment that the President wanted and might not have done this task as well.

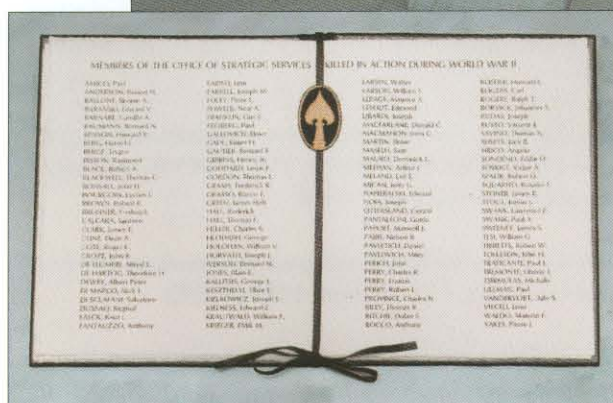
The US military in recent years has formally honored its own debt to OSS. In creating the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in 1987, the Pentagon consciously looked back to the OSS model of inter-service cooperation and success in unconventional warfare. USSOCOM in a sense represented a fulfillment of Donovan's original hope that all-arms special operations would become an integral part of US warfighting doctrine and a key supplement to regular combat planning and operations. Special Operations Command personnel, like their CIA counterparts, regard Donovan and OSS to be true ancestors in spirit and deed. They wear the insignia to prove this heritage; USSOCOM's shoulder patch is a gold lance-head on a black field, and it was modeled on a patch worn unofficially in OSS.

In CIA and USSOCOM, the US Government fulfilled General Donovan's vision. Central intelligence and unconventional warfare capabilities are now built into the nation's command and security policies and ready at all times to protect America and its interests.



A lapel pin was presented to each OSS employee upon the dissolution of the organization in October 1945.





The Book of Honor listing OSS personnel who died in service.

"To those of us here today, this is General Donovan's greatest legacy. He realized that a modern intelligence organization must not only provide today's tactical intelligence, it must provide tomorrow's long-term assessments. He recognized that an effective intelligence organization must not allow political pressures to influence its counsel. And, finally, he knew that no intelligence organization can succeed without recognizing the importance of people—people with discretion, ingenuity, loyalty, and a deep sense of responsibility to protect and promote American values."

From DCI William Webster's remarks at the dedication of the statue of Gen. William J. Donovan, CIA Headquarters, 28 October 1988.



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This sampling of works on the Office of Strategic Services and intelligence in World War II provides a range of views and information that can help the reader understand the role and significance of OSS. It is an initial guide to further reading and research and is not intended to be a complete list of books or articles on OSS, nor does the inclusion of a work on this list imply endorsement of its view or content by the US Government or any of its agencies or branches.





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