

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



## OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Inducted April 2009



When combat first erupted in Europe in 1939, William O. "Wild Bill" Donovan, an energetic visionary began to systematically lobby his Princeton classmate, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to establish an umbrella strategic intelligence gathering organization. In 1941, Roosevelt agreed to stand up the Coordinator of Information as a quasi-military agency placed directly under the Joint Chiefs. The COI grew quickly and after America entered the war in December 1941, the agency, was renamed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Its mission expanded the original COI mandate: not only were they to collect, analyze, and disseminate foreign intelligence; but they were also to conduct unconventional warfare.

A Special Operations division under the Special Intelligence branch was created to increase "the enemy's misery and weaken his will to resist." Volunteers, usually highly intelligent and self-motivated individuals, many holding PhDs, were recruited and trained for Operational Groups, tasked to collect intelligence and assist resistance units in sabotage behind enemy lines operations. The Operational Groups ranged in size from two to 34-man teams were inserted in North Africa, the Middle East, France, the Balkans, Greece and Italy.

The Jedburgh mission, was formed in 1944 to support the D-Day invasion. Consisting of three man multinational teams, were inserted into France, Belgium and Holland throughout the push into Germany, acquired intelligence simultaneous to coordinating with the various partisan resistance organizations conducting guerrilla operations against the Germans.

The OSS Detachment 101 was a formidable presence in the China-Burma-India Theater. Det 101 recruited, trained and led 11,000 Kachin tribesmen, eventually killing 10,000 Japanese with a minimal loss of its own. They also were instrumental in the Merrill's Marauders assault on Myitkinia airfield. Det 101 later spun off Det 202, 303 and 404 who operated in Thailand, French Indo-China and Korea respectively.

OSS Director William J. Donovan, believing that "persuasion, penetration, and intimidation" were modern day counterparts to "sapping and mining in the siege warfare of former days," added a Morale Operations branch. The MO produced and disseminated "black" propaganda in all areas of operations. Product included leaflets, radio broadcasts. And counterfeit money.

The Maritime Unit was stood up after it became apparent that the OSS needed a specialized amphibious capability. The Maritime Unit included US Army, Marines, Coast Guard and Navy personnel and was organized and tasked with the infiltration of agents and supply resistance groups by sea; the conduct of maritime sabotage; and the development of specialized maritime surface and subsurface equipment and devices. A total of five operational units were trained and fielded in the European, Mediterranean and CBI Theaters.

Many OSS veterans and several former OGs, MUs, and Jedburghs have had substantial impact on the United States since World War II. The Dulles brothers laid much of the policy during the Cold War. William E. Colby, who commanded the Norwegian Operational Group, served as the Central Intelligence Agency Director from 1973-1975 while William Casey, the director of Secret Intelligence Branch's London Office, was CIA Director from 1981 to 1987. Dr. Christian Lambertson, the Commander of the MU, later assisted the U.S. Navy in the creation of the Underwater Demolition Teams, the US Army in the Special Forces scuba teams and NASA in all aspects of the space program. Julia Child became a well known culinary artist.

The Jedburgh with the closest connection to Army Special Forces is Colonel Aaron Bank, working with MG McClure to establish a special operations capability in the Army, became the Commander of the first operational Special Forces group: the 10th SFG. Other influential OSS alumni include LTC Jack T. Shannon, and Majors Herbert R. Brucker and Caesar J. Civitella. Major General John K. Singlaub led the Studies and Observation Group in Vietnam from 1966-1968.

Although the OSS is not formally included in the Special Forces lineage and honors, its legacy endures and is visible in all Special Forces missions as well as its tactics and war fighting skills.