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# The Round Tablette

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**Welcome to the second March session of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.** Tonight's speaker is Ann Todd, author of *OSS: Operation Blackmail: One Woman's Covert War Against the Imperial Japanese Army*. She will tell the story of OSS Operative Betty McIntosh who used her journalism skills to develop black propaganda in the war against the Japanese in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI).

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner to the CIA, was to gather intelligence, conduct counter intelligence operations, place agents and saboteurs in enemy countries, operate with guerrilla forces, and generally raise hell behind enemy lines. The armed forces and the State department had limited, narrowly focused, intelligence branches. Only with the global demands of the Second World War could FDR overrule bureaucratic turf fighting to create this multi-level and comprehensive intelligence service. The character of the OSS and, to a large degree, the CIA and other successor organizations was due to the strong personality of William J. Donovan, a well-travelled war hero of WWI and successful Republican lawyer, who was a close confidant of President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR)

Although they were both from New York State and attended Columbia University Law School, they did not move in the same social circles. FDR was a wealthy patrician Democrat while Donovan was from a poor Irish Catholic Republican who earned his fortune. However, the two men did have several traits in common. They were both "spy buffs," interested in espionage, backdoor dealings, and unorthodox special operations. They were internationalists who believed that the United States should and would play a vital military role in any European war. In early 1940, FDR sent Donovan to England to meet with Prime Minister Winston Churchill to find out if England could survive the war. When Donovan arrived, he received access to British intelligence agents who encouraged him to set up his own agency. Beguiled by the idea of an independent intelligence agency reporting directly to him, FDR signed an executive order on 11 July 1941 creating a "Coordinator of Information" to collect foreign intelligence. Initially, The Office

of Information was William Donovan. By 13 June 1942, FDR restructured the COI into the Office of Strategic Services under the Joint Chiefs of Staff – but Donovan retained his personal access to FDR who remained very much interested in its operations and "toys." Though initially envisioned as a "league of gentlemen" and often derogatorily called the "Oh So Social" agency, Donovan hired anyone with talent, including women – who played important roles in the organization. By 1943, the OSS had over 10,000 people working in areas such as research and analysis to covert operations.

The OSS was to combine the intelligence produced by the military services, the State Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and act as a kind of clearing-house to provide better coordinate of the intelligence produced and make it more useful in operational planning. To get cooperation and data sharing between these different groups within the US government proved as difficult as fighting the enemy. The intrigues of foreign espionage were minor compared to the political intrigues that went on within the US government over the new OSS. Army Chief-of-Staff General George Marshall eventually accepted Donovan, but Navy and State resisted cooperation, and Donovan's greatest bureaucratic opponent was J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Donovan and Hoover each had spies in each other's organizations, and Hoover was just as likely to go to FDR to complain about Donovan as Donovan to complain about Hoover. As a result, the OSS tended to gather information itself without much help from the FBI (and little help from ONI, G2, etc.).

The OSS was divided into two main divisions: Operations and Intelligence. Operations consisted of organizing and supplying agents and guerrillas behind enemy lines, while the intelligence division provided information from around the world. There were various sections to the Operations branch: Secret Intelligence, Special Operations, Counterespionage, Maritime Units, and Morale Operations. Its Research and Development section was a true "007 Q" department. Atypical for the times, the OSS employed women in all its branches and sections, and they had many important jobs and responsibilities.

The OSS operated in Europe, the CBI, and to a limited extent in the Pacific Theaters. The

**If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns** – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or [coldpatton@yahoo.com](mailto:coldpatton@yahoo.com)

CBI was considered a “backwater” area to the OSS, when compared to the European and even the Pacific Theater of Operation, as the allied effort here was dominated by the United Kingdom in Burma, and subject to a difficult political environment inside China. Indeed, fighting Japan in China was never more than a peripheral effort for the Americans. At the end of the longest supply lines in the world, action in the CBI Theater was not decisive in defeating the Japanese. Worse, the geopolitical make-up of China worked against the US efforts, with factional strife between Communists led by Mao Zedong and Nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek, who hated each other more than they did the Japanese.

The area was ripe for OSS operations. Some of the most distinguished OSS operatives in CBI were talented women such as the artist Jane Foster, Julia Child (later a famous chef) and Betty McIntosh. McIntosh was an experienced journalist from Hawaii, fluent in Japanese, who became acting head of Morale Operations (MO) in the CBI. The mission of Morale Operations was to demoralize the Japanese through the spreading of lies, rumors, and “fake news” in artistically done pamphlets, newspaper forgeries, and radio programs while encouraging resistance among the conquered populations. Also known as black propaganda, these activities were designed to target the person within the soldier by creating doubt and fear. While the effectiveness of these techniques was hard to quantify, they remain a part of the operational world of spies today, as part of psychological and information warfare.

After the demise of the OSS, many former OSS operatives were absorbed into either the State Department or the new Central Intelligence Agency. Allen Dulles personally recruited Betty McIntosh to work for the CIA to prevent communism from gaining a foothold in post-war Japan. By the beginning of the Cold War, the work of the OSS had demonstrated the value and necessity for a sophisticated centralized intelligence service.

#### FURTHER READINGS:

Ann Todd, *OSS-Operation Blackmail* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017).

Maochun Yu, *OSS in China* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs: The Unknown Story of the Men and Women of WWII's OSS* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972).

Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: Free Press, 2011)

#### Announcements:

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table -

15 May 2018 – *Thaddeus Lowe's Aeronauts* - [www.tccwrt.com](http://www.tccwrt.com) - [info@tccwrt.com](mailto:info@tccwrt.com)

St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - 26 Mar. 2018 – *4th Wisconsin Infantry/Cavalry* - 715-386-1268 - [rossandhaines@comcast.net](mailto:rossandhaines@comcast.net)

**Fort Snelling Civil War Symposium - 7 Apr. 2018 - [info@tccwrt.com](mailto:info@tccwrt.com)**

Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345, 320-616-6050,

<http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

Minnesota Air Guard Museum -

[www.mnangmuseum.org](http://www.mnangmuseum.org) 612-713-2523

Friends of Ft. Snelling, [www.fortsnelling.org](http://www.fortsnelling.org)

World Without Genocide, 651-695-7621,

<http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/>

Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, MN, 320-564-6644, Air show - 16 June 2018.

<http://www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org>.

Airshow - Eden Prairie - 14-15 July 2018

[www.wotn.org](http://www.wotn.org) 952-746-6100

Military History Book Club, Har Mar Barnes & Noble: - Stoker, *Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*

- 28 Mar. 2018 - [sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com](mailto:sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com)

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - [crazyjerry45@hotmail.com](mailto:crazyjerry45@hotmail.com) - 651-338-2717

CAF - Commemorative Air Force -

[www.cafmn.org](http://www.cafmn.org) 651-455-6942

**We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or [coldpatton@yahoo.com](mailto:coldpatton@yahoo.com)**

#### Round Table Schedule 2018

12 Apr. Lucian Truscott: Greatest Field CO

10 May Marshall Plan: Saving Victory

