
The Round Tablette

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Welcome to the “Dr. Harold C. Deutsch Lecture” at the November session of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.

Tonight’s speaker is D.K.R Crosswell, author of *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith*. He will be speaking on General Smith’s contributions to the difficult orchestration of Allied forces in achieving victory in Europe.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this annual event, we offer a word of explanation. It was Dr. Deutsch’s custom to speak on a topic of his choosing at the November meeting. Because of his renowned scholarly reputation and knowledge of World War II, these were well-attended lectures. Many of his former students from the University of Minnesota came to this lecture. With his death, this Round Table took his name and honors him with the lecture series in his name.

Neither Harold Deutsch nor Walter Bedell “Beetle” Smith are well-recognized names from the Second World War. Harold Deutsch was part of the Research and Analysis Division of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and Beetle was one of Marshall’s men, and then Eisenhower’s Chief of Staff in Europe. They were each cogs in the larger organizations of the war effort. Deutsch wrote reports and managed OSS Headquarters first in London and then in Paris. As part of George Marshall’s staff, Smith organized the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and with the British, the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). With the organization of the JIC, Smith had to deal

with Deutsch’s boss William Donovan, whose special relationship with Franklin Roosevelt proved troublesome for the military. Smith was suspicious of Donovan’s desire to be in charge of all intelligence gathering and was equally uncomfortable with irregular, psychological, and unconventional warfare. Donovan built a huge OSS civilian intelligence infrastructure that employed thousands in multiple theaters, clashing with military planners who often frustrated him with their restrictions on OSS operations. Even so, Smith and Donovan spoke highly of the other.

Born on October 5, 1895, in Indiana, Walter Bedell Smith or “Beetle,” a nickname derived from this middle name, did not rise in the military like many of his contemporaries. Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton were West Point graduates. Smith began his military career in 1911 at sixteen as a private in the Indiana National Guard. In the Guard, he aided in Ohio Flood relief, the Indianapolis Streetcar strike, and in Mexico with the Pancho Villa Expedition where he served on the staff of the Indiana National Guard. He qualified for officer training school in 1917 and eventually became a Lieutenant with the 4th Infantry Division. Landing in France with his unit in June 1917, Smith was wounded after two days combat in the Aisne-Marne Offensive. Returning to the United States, he served on the War Department’s Intelligence Staff and spent most of the 1920s and 1930s going from one school to another. Although he missed attending West Point, he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, the small arms school at Fort Benning Georgia, and the Army War College. Promotions came slowly and after over twenty years in the service, Smith was still a major. The situation changed quickly when in 1941 when Major Smith went to Washington to be on George Marshall’s staff.

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

Unlike his comic strip name-sake, he had great capacity for organization, liaison work, and analysis. By the time he organized the JIC, the JCS, and the CCS, he was a brigadier general.

When Eisenhower, because of his organizational skills and friendly relations with the British, became Supreme Commander of the European Theater of Operations, he requested that Smith become his Chief of Staff. While Eisenhower maintained a pleasant, distant presence, Smith's job required an aggressive manner, and he became known as Ike's "hatchet" man. Despite his reputation of being tough, Smith managed to deal with the touchy egos of Bernard Montgomery, George Patton, Harold Alexander, and Mark Clark. Throughout his tenure as Ike's Chief of Staff, Smith's relations between the Western Allies remained cordial. Smith never saw actual combat in this war but accepted the surrenders of Italy and Germany as Eisenhower's representative.

Fighters alone do not win wars. No cinematic masterpiece will be made about Beetle Smith or Harold Deutsch, people who worked 'behind the scenes' to provide the plans and the knowledge necessary to achieve victory and deserve to be remembered.

FURTHER READINGS:

D.K.R. Crosswell, *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

Stephen R. Taafe, *Marshall and His Generals: US Army Commanders in World War II* (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

Benjamin Runkle, *Generals in the Making: How Marshall, Eisenhower, Patton, and Their Peers Became the Commanders who won World War II* (Lanham, MD: Stackpole Books, 2019).

Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance and US Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 2000).

David Rigby, *Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

Announcements:

Vietnam War Roundtable – TBD

rldietrich@mnmilitarymuseum.org

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table - 17 Nov. 2020 - *Gen. Grant at the Battle of Belmont* and 15 Dec. 2020 - *General George Thomas* - www.tccwrt.com - info@tccwrt.com

St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - TBD - 715-386-1268 - rossandhaines@comcast.net

Military History Book Club, Har Mar Barnes & Noble - TBD - sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com

Civil War Symposium -TBD - 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 - 612-713-2523 - www.mnangmuseum.org

8th AF Historical Society of MN, KC Hall Bloomington, Wednesdays at 1130 -

<https://www.8thmn.org>.

Friends of Ft. Snelling - www.fortsnelling.org

World Without Genocide - 651-695-7621 -

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

Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, MN - Air show - TBD - 320-564-6644 -

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

Wings of the North Airshow - Eden Prairie - TBD - 952-746-6100 - www.wotn.org

Winston Churchill Book Club -

lin.hopkins@hotmail.com

Alliance Francaise 612-332-0436 - www.afmsp.org

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - 651-338-2717 -

crazyjerry45@hotmail.com

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - 651-455-6942 - www.cafmn.org

Selim Center for Life Long Learning, UST,

<https://www.stthomas.edu/selimcenter/>

Western Naval Historical Association

info@wnha.net

We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

Round Table Schedule 2020-2021

8 Dec Origins of the Great Pacific War
2021

19 Jan Aerial Intelligence in Europe's Air War

9 Feb Struggle for Middle East Oil and War

9 Mar Nazi Art

23 Mar Nazi Scientists in the US Space Program

13Apr The Tragedy of Poland: Nazis; Soviets

11 May The "Mighty Eighth" and Victory in

Europe

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