

**"The OSS was
an organization
designed to do
great things."**

– Adm. Eric T. Olson, USN (Ret.),
former commander, U.S. Special
Operations Command



An artist's rendition of the exterior of the future National Museum of Intelligence and Special Operations (NMISO).

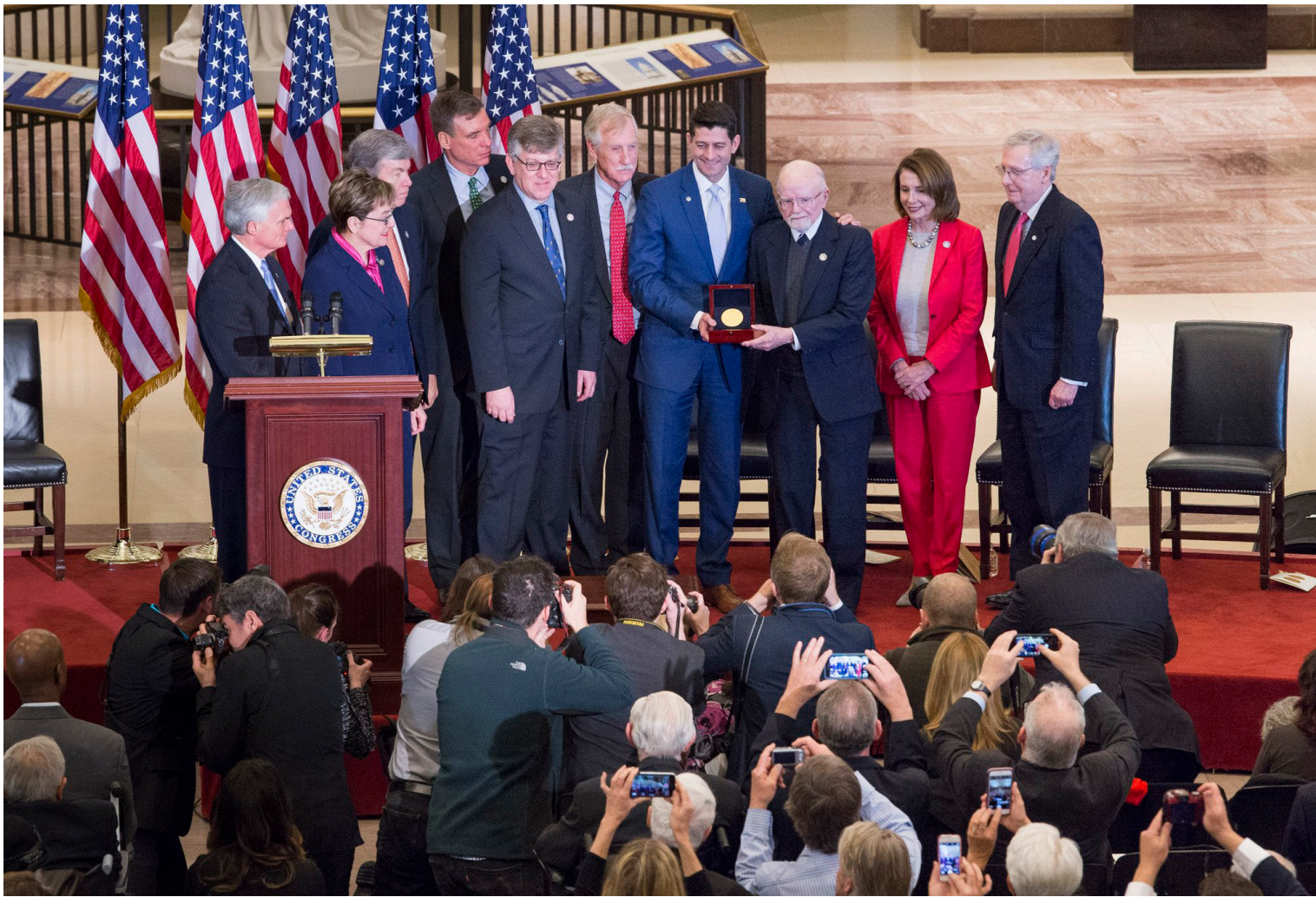
OSS SOCIETY PHOTO

THE OSS SOCIETY

Honoring the Legacy and Educating for the Future

BY DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN





When the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was terminated following President Harry S Truman’s executive order in 1947 that abolished it, the organization’s founder and only leader, Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, was determined that the nation’s first intelligence and counter-espionage agency would not become forgotten history. Soon after its official demise, in a room in Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, Donovan founded the Veterans of OSS. In the 1990s, surviving OSS members were aging and their ranks were rapidly shrinking. Wanting the organization to outlast them, in 1997, Veterans of OSS was reconstituted into the OSS Society in order to carry on the legacy of the OSS, honor those who make noteworthy contributions through their service in the intelligence and special operations communities, and to educate and inspire future generations.

In its mission statement, the society states that it honors “the historic accomplishments of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II – the first organized effort by the United States to implement a centralized system of strategic intelligence and the predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] and U.S. Special Operations Command” and the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research. “It educates the American public regarding the continuing importance of strategic intelligence and special operations to the preservation of freedom.”

Charles T. Pinck became president of the OSS Society in 2002 and has presided over a number of important achievements. “I think the proudest thing was the presentation of a Congressional Gold Medal to the OSS,” he said. “It was a long-fought effort and our proudest accomplishment so far.”

“I think our greatest achievement will be when we open the National Museum of Intelligence and Special Operations [NMISO]. We just signed a lease for an 80-acre site in Loudon County, Virginia, on which to build it.”

The Congressional Gold Medal is Congress’ highest civilian honor. Rep. Bob Latta, R-Ohio, House sponsor of the bill, said the medal will ensure OSS veterans’ “heroic actions during one of our country’s most trying times will not be forgotten.” Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., co-sponsor of the bill in the Senate, said that with the awarding of the medal, “Congress has ensured that their courage of spirit and their love of country will long live on in our nation’s memory.”

In a special ceremony at the Capitol on March 21, 2018, Speaker of the House the Honorable Paul Ryan presented the Congressional Gold Medal. The medal is now on permanent display in the Smithsonian Institution.



Opposite: In a ceremony on March 21, 2018, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the OSS. **Left:** The Congressional Gold Medal that was presented to the OSS. **Below:** An artist's rendition of the interior of the future National Museum of Intelligence and Special Operations (NMISO).



When the State Department began a redevelopment project on Navy Hill, across the street from the State Department building, Pinck learned that part of that redevelopment included the leveling of the three buildings on Observatory Hill that were the original headquarters of the OSS as well as the first headquarters of its successor, the CIA. "So obviously, the buildings had an important historical connection and we wanted them saved," Pinck said. On Jan. 12, 2017, after years of hard work, Pinck said, "We had the buildings added to the National Register of Historic Places."

Looking forward, Pinck said, "I think our greatest achievement will be when we open the National Museum of Intelligence and Special Operations [NMISO]. We just signed a lease for an 80-acre site in Loudon County, Virginia, on which to build it."

The project began about eight years ago. The society commissioned Lord Cultural Resources to develop a master plan for the complex that included concept, visitor experience, operational, staffing, and facility plans, as well as capital cost estimates and projections of attendance (approximately 100,000 per year for the first five years), operating revenue, and operating expenses. Honorary chairmen and members of the steering committee are former secretaries of defense Robert M. Gates and Leon E. Panetta and Adm. William H. McRaven, USN (Ret.) former commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

"Its purpose is threefold," Pinck said. "First, to honor Americans serving at the tip of the spear; second, to educate the American public on the role intelligence and special operations have in the preservation of freedom; and finally, inspire future generations of Americans to serve their country. It's a pretty high calling, but I think it's something that's achievable, and I think it is something people will want to support."

Curt Fentress of Fentress Architects was commissioned to design the museum and grounds. Fentress used as his inspiration for the

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Above: Adm. Eric Olson presenting The OSS Society's Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Christian Lambertsen at the 2009 William J. Donovan Award Dinner. **Right:** Air Force Lt. Gen. Scott Howell, vice commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (left) and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Shane Gandy, 2017 Peter Ortiz-OSS Award recipient and operations officer for Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), at the William J. Donovan Award Dinner in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 21, 2017.



landscape the OSS spartip, calling it "A dramatic and iconic architectural gesture is a befitting salute to Gen. Donovan's 'glorious amateurs.'" The 67,000-square-foot museum building features an escalating ribbed design that reflects the shape and beauty of the wing of the American bald eagle. It will contain a 4,000-square-foot lobby and flexible event space, 19,000 square feet of permanent exhibition space, an educational center equipped with flexible learning spaces, and a 200-seat multifunctional space suitable for a wide range of events.

Just as the exterior is an homage to the OSS, so too is the interior design. It is inspired by the Paris Ritz Hotel's Bar Hemingway. Hemingway's son, John (known as "Jack") was a member of the OSS, working with the resistance in the South of France. Hemingway himself briefly served as well, thanks to a "battlefield" appointment through a handwritten note in a village not far from Paris by OSS commander Col. David Bruce. In an escapade straight out of Hollywood, Bruce, Hemingway, and their motley group of resistance fighters dashed into the city along with the French Second Armored Division and American units, winding up at the Ritz Hotel, where they celebrated the liberation of Paris at the bar, drinking martinis.

Displays will feature a wide range of interactive technologies, re-created "escape rooms," and mission profiles that allow visitors to go "undercover" on a mission and experience, minus the danger, what it must have been like. And the displays will reveal that, as fascinating as the technology seen in James Bond films was, it is nothing compared to what was used in real life.

The NMISO will be more than a traditional museum. Officials and educators from private industry, surrounding school districts, and Georgetown University are in the process of creating a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) syllabus that uses the museum's resources and archives as case studies. In addition, it will offer educational programs and seminars tailored to the ever-changing needs of intelligence and special operations personnel as well as contractors that support those communities.

Originally, only people who served in the OSS could be members of the OSS Society. Over time that changed. Pinck said that today membership is divided into several categories, beginning with "OSS

veterans, of which there are increasingly fewer, though we had about 20 show up at the latest awards ceremony. Another category is descendants of OSS veterans, and I am in that category. The bulk of our membership consists of people who served in intelligence or special operations, or in some component of our national security. For anyone else wishing to become a member, we have associate memberships available. Information for membership can be found on our website."

The OSS Society gives out a number of awards recognizing individuals who have made important contributions to the intelligence and special operations community. Awards are presented at a special black tie William J. Donovan Award ceremony held each year in Washington, D.C.

The awards include the William J. Donovan Award®, presented "to an individual who has rendered distinguished service to the United States of America" and has "exemplified the distinguishing features that characterized General Donovan's lifetime of public service."

The Hugh Montgomery Award®, in honor of the late Hugh Montgomery, past chairman of the OSS Society, is "given to retired officers from the CIA in recognition for outstanding service."

The Peter Ortiz Award®, named after Marine Col. Peter Ortiz, the most decorated member of the OSS, is given to an outstanding active-duty member of SOCOM.

The Virginia Hall Award®, named after OSS operator Virginia Hall, the only woman to receive the Distinguished Service Cross in World War II, honors women who have performed outstanding service in the intelligence or special operations communities.

The John Waller Award®, named in honor of OSS historian John Waller, recognizes achievement in intelligence and SOCOM community scholarship.

The Distinguished Service Award® is presented to OSS veterans and other individuals who have made significant contributions to operations or the OSS legacy.

The OSS Society provides speakers to a wide variety of groups, is the publisher of *The OSS Society Journal*, and has established OSS memorials in the United States and Europe. It is a 501(c)(3) public charity. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. More information about the OSS Society is available on its website www.ossociety.org.

WILLIAM J. DONOVAN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dr. Michael G. Vickers is the latest individual to receive the William J. Donovan Award® in recognition of his “distinguished service to the United States of America.” He began his long and distinguished career in the Army, serving as a sergeant in the Special Forces (Green Berets). He later became a CIA operations officer, participating in the invasion of Grenada, the U.S. government’s operational response to the Beirut bombings, and the covert effort to drive the Red Army out of Afghanistan.

From 2007 to 2011, as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, he was the “service” secretary for all special operations forces and had policy oversight of all of the Defense Department’s operational capabilities. He conceived and led the largest expansion of special operations forces in America’s history and oversaw several other major capability investments ranging from next-generation long-range strike to undersea warfare to deter future great power war.

From 2011 to 2015, Vickers served as the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, exercising authority, direction, and control over the National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, Defense Security Service, and the intelligence components of the military services and combatant commands.



2017 William J. Donovan
recipient Dr. Michael G. Vickers.

1961	The Honorable Allen W. Dulles
1963	The Honorable John J. McCloy
1964	Lt. Gen. William W. Quinn
1965	President Dwight D. Eisenhower
1966	The Earl Mountbatten of Burma
1967	The Honorable Everett McKinley Dirksen
1969	J. Russell Forgan
1970	The Astronauts of Apollo 11: Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, Buzz Aldrin
1971	The Honorable David K.E. Bruce
1974	The Honorable William J. Casey
1977	The Honorable Robert D. Murphy
1979	His Excellency Jacques Chaban-Delmas
1981	The Right Honorable Margaret Thatcher
1982	The Honorable John A. McCone
1983	The Honorable Richard Helms
1983	Sir William Stephenson
1986	President Ronald W. Reagan
1991	President George H.W. Bush
1993	Dr. Carl F. Eifler
1995	The Honorable William E. Colby
2004	The Honorable Ralph J. Bunche
2005	Judge William H. Webster
2009	Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA
2011	Adm. Eric T. Olson, USN (Ret.)
2012	The Honorable Robert M. Gates
2013	Adm. William H. McRaven, USN
2014	The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
2015	Ambassador Hugh Montgomery
2016	Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, USAF (Ret.)
2017	Dr. Michael G. Vickers

PETER ORTIZ AWARD®

Presented to active-duty members of SOCOM

2015	CW5 Stephen Combs, USA
2016	CW4 Robert J. Hunt, USA
2017	CW4 David S. Gandy, USA

HUGH MONTGOMERY AWARD®

Presented to retired CIA operations officers

2014	Jack Devine
2015	John D. Bennett
2016	David Cohen
2017	Joseph Wippl

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD®

2011	Fisher Howe, special assistant to Gen. William Donovan
2012	Ambassador Charles Hostler, who served in the OSS' Counterintelligence Branch (X-2) and went ashore on D-Day
2012	Frederick Mayer, the real “inglorious bastard” of OSS Operation GREENUP
2013	Col. William H. Pietsch Jr., USA (Ret.): Jedburgh
2015	Helias Doundoulakis
2015	Col. Frank A. Gleason, USA (Ret.)
2016	Caesar Daraio & Thomas Rossi (fought with the OSS Italian Operational Groups: “Donovan’s Devils”)
2016	John Billings, 885th Bombardment Group (Heavy) (Special)
2016	Bill Becker (“Carpetbagger, 801st/492nd Bombardment Group, the air arm of the OSS)
2017	Clement D. Dowler (fought with OSS Operational Group LOUISE)