

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

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Remarks

Executive Secretary
3 Dec '87

Date

3637 (10-81)

STAT



VETERANS OF OSS

40th FLOOR

30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10112

(212) 307-4100 • Telex: 127429



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87-3683x

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November 23, 1987

President and Board of Trustees
Colby College
Waterville, Maine 04901

Gentlemen:

It was brought to my attention that in the November 15th Sunday edition of the New York Times the faculty of your college has voted to ban recruiting students for the Central Intelligence Agency.

We former proven practitioners of intelligence operations so helpful to the winning of World War II, are most amazed that the faculty of such a grand old American college as Colby should be so innocent, naive or unable to understand that if we do not have a modern secret intelligence agency, we might as well give up the struggle and decide Western civilization is too effete to protect itself against our enemies. The reasons reported as given by your faculty for the ban are so false they need no refutation; your faculty is simply misinformed.

In the dangerous world in which we live, clandestine as well as overt intelligence is a harsh necessity, and the need of our best brains in this effort is vital.

We exhort you, therefore, to take a firm stand against this inane action of your faculty and permit the CIA to interest your best intellects in the furtherance of intelligence activities, without which the United States will never be able to meet on equal terms the secret agencies of other nations, some of which represent a pestilence that crawls in the darkness. Colby owes this to America -- and certainly some of its students seem to think so.

Yours truly,

Geoffrey M.T. Jones
Geoffrey M.T. Jones
President

GMTJ/g1

cc: Hon. William H. Webster ✓
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

P-311-IR



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- Elizabeth P. McIntosh
- Robert Macnair Morgan

23 Nov 87

Dear Judge Webster,

Thought you might
also like to see the enclosed re our
Reunion in Bangkok / Thailand.

We have some very
good friends out there.

All best,

Geoffrey Jones.

Scene

In Thailand: A Cloak-and-Dagger Reunion

They were members of that dwindling band that Franklin D. Roosevelt once called "my secret army," now unarmed, and far from secret anymore. Almost all were in their late 60s and early 70s, no longer lean and flat-stomached as they were in those World War II days of danger and glory. But whatever their physical condition, the visiting band of Americans had great stories of derring-do to tell and a wonderful place to tell them: Bangkok's Saranrom Palace, a 105-year-old stately structure that serves as Thailand's Foreign Ministry. Last month the palace was the site of a special reunion dinner for

71, a former U.S. Navy colonel from Washington who boasted a new artificial hip joint. Devlin was in Burma during the war with OSS Detachment 101, which won the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation for its guerrilla activities against the Japanese. He added, looking down at his Brooks Brothers seersucker suit. "Now we're just old boys."

But very special Old Boys, not to mention Old Girls. The members of the OSS group had each anted up at least \$10,000 for a week-long visit to Thailand that included the Free Thai commemoration. OSS get-togethers have been annual

hadn't dropped the atom bomb, we were ready to go into the soft underbelly of the Japanese in Thailand, Indochina and Singapore," declared Willis Bird, 78, a retired business consultant from Pennsylvania. Bird is confined to a wheelchair but still looks willing, if given the command, to try that invasion anyway.

Not all the OSS alums served in Thailand, or even in Asia, for that matter. More than half fought and schemed in Europe and arranged espionage missions with Tito's Yugoslav Partisans, the French Maquis and the Italian resistance. But all felt equally comfortable basking in the recognition of the feats performed by their comrades-in-arms in Thailand. "When you belong to the OSS fraternity," says Geoffrey M.T. Jones, a debonaire, mustachioed former television producer, "there is an immediate congenial interchange." Jones should know. A cloak-and-dagger man who parachuted behind the lines into France, he is full-time president of the Veterans of OSS, a voluntary organization founded in 1947 that now claims a worldwide membership of more than 1,000.

The gala dinner at the Thai Foreign Ministry was a Cinderella affair: black-tie dress, ball gowns, vintage wines, warm speeches. But another rare honor awaited the vets: an audience with King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the constitutional monarch, who usually offers such meetings only to visiting heads of state. The King met the OSS vets at Chitralada Palace, the massive Victorian-style royal residence. In a session of almost an hour, Bhumibol expressed his gratitude for the OSS and its exploits in his kingdom.

When not hobnobbing with royalty, the former spooks behaved like any other tourists. They shopped in the watery River City and gawked at the three-spired Grand Palace, the gold-roofed edifice that is a re-creation of the splendors of the old Siamese capital, Ayutthaya, which was sacked by the Burmese in 1767. On their last day in Thailand, the vets visited the legendary bridge on the Kwai River that was built on the backs of Allied prisoners of war. The OSS alumni laid a wreath in memory of the POWs who died in the effort.

Back at Bangkok's Oriental Hotel, the oldsters gabbed away a final evening on the banks of the Chao Phraya, the River of Kings, which flows through the heart of Bangkok. "If I had to launch an operation to blow up a bridge, I'd use one of those rice boats out there to get to the target," said Jones, pointing at a low-slung craft that floated slowly by. There was no war, no bridge, no operation. But there was still a bit of fire left in the warriors from OSS. — *By Dean Brelis/Bangkok*



Recalling days of danger and glory: OSS vets and spouses at Bangkok's Grand Palace

some 70 members of the fabled Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the modern CIA, a handful of whose members had fought to free Thailand from its wartime Japanese occupiers.

There was William Pye, for example, a balding, semiretired Massachusetts businessman who now works in real estate. During the war Pye, now 68, trained the first Thai natives who joined the OSS from the Free Thai Movement, the anti-Japanese resistance. He led the group overland from China's Yunnan province into Thailand, where they reported Japanese troop movements and pinpointed targets for Allied bombers flying from India.

Along with Pye was Francis Loetterle, 69, a retired executive from Arizona. Loetterle jumped behind Japanese lines into Thailand in 1945 as leader of a second team of resistance fighters to make the leap. The entire first team of partisans was spotted by the occupiers and shot out of the sky. "We were civilians who joined the OSS to do a job," said Francis Devlin,

events in the U.S. and Europe, but this was the first of its kind held in Asia.

Perhaps no single Thai was more hospitable than the host at the Foreign Ministry's reception and commemorative dinner, Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila. A small, wiry man, Siddhi, 68, is also the Thai air chief marshal. But he is proudest of all that after Pearl Harbor, while a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he joined the Free Thai Movement. Siddhi came back to his homeland in 1945 as an OSS agent to locate Allied prisoners of war. As the minister told his guests in a voice trembling with emotion, "I always look back with pride to my time with the OSS."

So did all those present at the gathering, an unlikely crew of former corporate executives, engineers and bankers. Their days of hard action were far behind—most said they had given up sports like squash and tennis in favor of more meditative rounds of golf—but memories were still fresh and spirits exuberant. "If we

BANGKOK POST TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3, 1987

A reunion of friendship

ON A stormy night more than 42 years ago, Francis Loetterle parachuted into Thailand where under the noses of the Japanese army he and his small team trained some 100 "Free Thai" in sabotage, street fighting and jungle warfare during the closing months of World War II. Last week the 69-year-old retired business executive was reunited with a number of his surviving "students" as well as fellow American secret agents, guerrillas and propagandists who made up an audacious, decorated, sometimes controversial spy outfit known as the Office of Strategic Services.

by
Denis Gray

The one-time operatives, some now of step or walking with the aid of canes, called each other by their code names, carried tags of long disbanded units and reminisced about clever intelligence gambits, costly blunders and life — and not frequently death — behind Japanese lines.

Alexander MacDonald, commander of an OSS unit in Thailand, met his communications man Dilworth Brinton for the first time since the war and went shopping with his former wife Betty McIntosh, who served with OSS in China and wrote a book titled "Undercover-girl." Her speciality was concocting rumours, lies and fake orders to moralise Japanese forces.

"Frankly, I'm not big on dirty tricks, the CIA. But ours was a wonderful mission and without question one of the finest experiences of my life," Loetterle said. "I am appreciated — and am to this day. The Thais never forgot."

Indeed the 70 OSS veterans, wives and widows were accorded a welcome normally reserved for heads of state, including an audience with His Majesty the King.

Besides forging lasting personal ties between the Americans and former "Free Thai," many of whom rose to prominent positions, the OSS is widely credited here with helping to check postwar demands the British and other allies that Thailand be treated as an enemy nation since it had formally sided with the Japanese.

Thailand's ambassador to Washington, Seni Pramoj, refused to present his country's declaration of



His Majesty graciously accepted the Donovan Medal as a symbol of friendship from Geoffrey Jones, president of the Veterans of OSS and the William J. Donovan Memorial Foundation, on the occasion of the King's 60th birthday. The presentation took place at Chitlada Palace last Thursday. Picture by Royal courtesy.

war and began organising the anti-Japanese resistance at home and abroad. The top "Free Thai" OSS agent in Thailand was a man named Pridi Banomyong, code-named "Ruth," who became a prime minister in the immediate postwar era, when several demobilised OSS officers chose to remain in Thailand.

MacDonald, who was flying towards a drop zone in Thailand when the war ended, started the English-language newspaper *Bangkok Post*. Willis Bird, who still lives in Bangkok, pioneered Thailand's stock market. Jim Thompson revived the country's silk industry and disappeared in the Malaysian jungles under still mysterious circumstances in 1967.

These were among a talented group of young men who volunteered to serve in an agency set up July 11, 1941, to spearhead America's intelligence effort in the war. Led by William "Wild Bill" Dono-

van, a charismatic and freewheeling officer, the OSS was blooded in North Africa and then entered the European theatre where it was accused by some orthodox US commanders of waging a "private war."

"We worked with anybody who would help us win the war, and they weren't all Sunday school types," recalled Geoffrey Jones, current president of The Veterans of the OSS. "We tried crazy things — but some of them were successful."

OSS agents recruited Mafia members, Roman Catholic priests and fashion models. Jones said one project floated was to attach fire bomblets to bats which were to land beneath Japanese houses. The bats proved a homing species and returned upon release to ignite the experimental site headquarters.

But the OSS also notched major triumphs, including the heroic operations of Detachment 101 which wreaked havoc behind Japanese

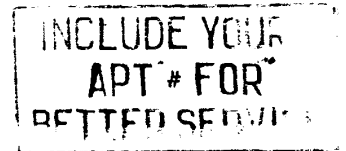
lines in Burma. It is regarded as the first American unit to organise local guerrillas for intelligence and combat, and a forerunner of the Green Berets in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, the OSS worked with Ho Chi Minh's guerrillas — and after victory argued with Washington that the United States should have maintained its ties with the revolutionary leader rather than side with the French in Indochina.

The OSS was disbanded on September 20, 1945, and while some of its members, like McIntosh, joined its successor — the Central Intelligence Agency — many returned to civilian life.

Jones said about 1,000 belong to the veterans group, and the names of 750 others who served with OSS are known. The organisation holds periodic get-togethers, but the Bangkok "reunion of friendship" was the first in Asia. — AP

VETERANS OF OSS
30 Rockefeller Plaza, 40th Floor
New York, NY 10112



Hon. William H. Webster
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

