

The Washington Post
The New York Times **BOOK REV. p53**
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____

Date **25 SEP 1988**

A Spook When Young

THE SECRET WAR AGAINST HITLER

By William Casey.
Illustrated. 304 pp. Washington:
Regnery Gateway. \$19.95.

By Robert Sherrod

THE reading public barely noticed when William J. Casey's book on the American Revolution was published in 1976. But in 1978 the tax lawyer mounted his history hobbyhorse again and produced 600 rough-hewn manuscript pages about his time with the Office of Strategic Services in 1943-45.

Casey never quite finished the book — a final chapter is obviously lacking — because big-time Republican politics intervened. In 1979 he raised great gobs of East Coast money for Ronald Reagan's second run at the White House and in 1980 became campaign manager when John P. Sears was fired. President Reagan rewarded Casey, not with the State Department he wanted, but with the colossal Central Intelligence Agency and all the power, mostly invisible, that it embodied. Casey held the job for six stormy years until a brain tumor killed him in May, 1987, just as Congress opened hearings on the Iran-contra scandal, in which he was at least waist-deep.

Now the 600 pages have been wrestled into print and grandiosely titled "The Secret War Against Hitler." Half history, half memoir, the book is a useful guide to O.S.S. operations run out of London, where Casey, then 30 years old and a lieutenant in the Navy, started out as Col. David K. E. Bruce's administrative assistant. The O.S.S. office on Grosvenor Street was populated by the likes of Navy Capt. Junius Morgan of the banking family, Comdr. Lester Armour of the Chicago meat-packing clan and Lieut. Comdr. Raymond Guest, "fresh from the polo fields of Long Island and Virginia." Maj. Gen. William (Wild Bill) Donovan, founding father of the O.S.S., did have an affinity for the well connected.

Malcolm Muggeridge, then a major in the British army, remembered the early O.S.S. men "arriving like *jeunes filles en fleur* straight from a finishing school, all fresh and innocent, to start work in our frowsy old intelligence brothel." These bewildered Americans were "a pain in the neck" to Kim Philby of the Foreign Office, who knew a thing or two about spying — as he starkly revealed upon defecting to Moscow two decades later. But the British and the Yanks soon adjusted to their difficult marriage, due in no small measure to stroking by the urbane David Bruce, who would become not only Ambassador to Britain but also to France and Germany.

Robert Sherrod has written five books about World War II, including "Tarawa: The Story of a Battle."

Relations with Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's subordinates ranged from good to terrible. Lieut. Col. William Quinn, G-2 (head of intelligence) of the Seventh Army, was delighted to have O.S.S. parachutes blossoming behind German lines in the south of France, dropping spies — Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, later to be newspaper columnists, among them — to join the maquis and to radio information about gun emplacements and minefields that smoothed the way for the

Seventh's tanks. But Col. Benjamin A. (Monk) Dickson, G-2 of the First Army, banished the O.S.S. from his turf. Casey tartly observes that Dickson was relaxing in Paris as the enemy juggernaut poured through First Army lines in the fog-shrouded Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge. Code-breaking flopped because the Germans maintained radio silence; hence spies were required.

But the Bulge was contained and the war moved toward Germany. Four months before it ended, Casey, now clad in civvies (the better to deal with colonels and generals) got a command of his own: Chief of Secret Intelligence for the European Theater, meaning spy-master in charge of operations inside Germany. Instead of fresh-faced young Americans, he enlisted a mixed bag of Poles, German prisoners of war, Russian émigrés, Belgians and Dutch. Altogether he dropped 28 two-man teams — there were others under French command — into Germany beyond the Rhine. (Some of these spies were Communists; General Donovan said, "Never mind that, win the war.") Casey's spies, incredibly brave, were mostly too late; the advancing Allied armies caught up with them before they passed much information to the special relay planes flying overhead. It does seem, however, that Casey should have received a better medal than the Bronze Star.

• • •

"The Secret War Against Hitler" underwent considerable change between the galleys sent to reviewers and copies sold in bookstores. Sim Smiley had done some research in O.S.S. files for Casey in his last year, at a time when he still hoped to return to the work. She has now edited and expanded the book from 225 printed pages to 304, the increment consisting mostly of documents declassified eight months after Casey's death.

Another dividend is an angry foreword by M. R. D. Foot, the historian of British Special Operations, who laments that his friend Casey has become "everybody's whipping boy" now that he can "neither answer back nor sue for libel." An index has been supplied which, sadly, omits such key players as Brig. Gen. Thomas Betts, Eisenhower's contact man for Casey's 1945 operations in Germany, and Brig. Gen. Frederick B. Butler, commander of Task Force Butler, which, with O.S.S. assistance, swept up the Germans after the August 1944 landings in southern France. □