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**NATIONAL MARKET COVERAGE****TRANSCRIPT**

**FOR** PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF **STATION** WETA Radio  
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**PROGRAM** All Things Considered **CITY** Washington, D.C.  
**DATE** February 26, 1995 5:00 PM **AUDIENCE**  
**SUBJECT** John Ford Exhibit at CIA

**BROADCAST EXCERPT**

**JACKIE LYDON:** The film director John Ford was born 100 years ago this month. Most of us know him as the master craftsman of American Westerns, with either John Wayne or Henry Fonda playing the hero, as in the 1946 film "My Darling Clementine."

[Clip of dialogue from "My Darling Clementine"]

**LYDON:** But Ford, perhaps the most influential director ever to come out of Hollywood and certainly one of the most award-winning, had a lesser-known side as a master craftsman of Oscar-winning espionage.

A new exhibit has just opened on his work, but you won't get to see it because it's at the CIA, at its massive gray complex in Langley, Virginia, behind two security checkpoints. Four of Ford's golden Oscars stand in a little glass case there. The CIA wanted to honor Ford for his time with the Office for Strategic Services, or OSS, the CIA's precursor in World War II.

As head of the OSS film/photographic team, Ford invented aerial camera techniques and combined stock footage with new film to make what might today be called docudrama. The Navy had asked Ford for help after Pearl Harbor.

**LINDA MCCARTHY:** John Ford took them at their word when they told him, "We want you to do an accurate portrayal of what happened at Pearl Harbor." And, of course, there were some recriminations back and forth: Why did it happen? And John Ford explained on film some of the situations that led up to Pearl Harbor. And they weren't particularly flattering, to be perfectly candid. And that was deemed a little too accusatory for that era.

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So, what they did do was shorten the film down to 34 minutes and show it in defense plants as kind of a morale-booster, patriotic type thing. And it worked well.

LYDON: A morale-booster? Pearl Harbor?

MCCARTHY: Mmm-hmm. Go get 'em. That sort of thing, you know. Turn the cheeks on 'em here.

LYDON: How did John Ford manage to get to Pearl Harbor? Did they call him right after the bombing and say, "Come and view the damage," or what?

MCCARTHY: What he did was take official government footage that was shot and then intersperse it with miniature setups he'd done in a Hollywood film studio. So he kind of blended the two and created that genre that you see very -- a lot of today. He was kind of a pioneer in that. So that's what he did.

JOHN FORD [narrating film]: On they came, wave after wave, boldly, fearlessly. They had little to fear. They knew that our task forces were at sea and they knew their disposition.

LYDON: Let's step back a minute here in terms of where we are. Most of us think of John Ford, of course, as the director of "The Searchers" and "The Quiet Man" and the Westerns that he built into an American institution. How did he get started with the Office of Strategic Services?

MCCARTHY: The man who headed it, William J. Donovan, was a phenomenal creature in and of himself, and he had this particular magnetism where he could draw the likes of a John Ford or the baseball player Moe Berg or even Julia Child, the French Chef. She worked for OSS. He had this magnetism that these people would follow him to hell and back because they knew he had a perfectly good, logical reason that would pay off in the end if they did so.

LYDON: The baseball player Moe Berg spied in Europe for the OSS. Chef Julia Child worked as a clerk.

John Ford's mission had a double purpose: surveillance and deception. He mounted enormous film cameras, the Mitchells, in the belly of Allied aircraft and took surveillance film. But it was also deception. He was making aerial sweeps of the Normandy coastline at places the allies were not planning to land. Ford's crew nicknamed their airborne film technique ippy-dippy intelligence.

MCCARTHY: These are people that had been making Westerns over in Hollywood, all of a sudden were providing aerial data that led to things like Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy. And the other thing he did was document the actual process of the invasion.

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Donovan knew, Roosevelt knew this was a historic moment. It was the largest armada ever put together of its kind in history and it probably will never be matched, to its likes, again. And they wanted it documented. So Ford and his film/photographics shot most of the U.S. Government film that you see as reflecting D-Day.

LYDON: Do we have any pictures of the films he took, any frames?

MCCARTHY: This is a sweep that was done of the Normandy coastline on the 19th of May, 1944. And, of course, D-Day was June 6th, 1944. So they're doing the sweeps. Not only is he serving as a diversion, but you see that is an actual picture. And what you have there is a picture of Hitler's Atlantic Wall, the barriers. The sticks right there with the gizmos on top are actually mines. And this is something crucial. If you're going to send men in boats aboard there, you need to know what's there. So they used that to say, "Okay. Maybe we don't want to actually put them right there. We'll put them a little further south."

LYDON: So we've got posts marking mines in the Atlantic Ocean...

MCCARTHY: Mmm-hmm.

LYDON: ...off the beach of the Normandy coastline.

MCCARTHY: Exactly. And I dare say that there would have been a lot more casualties if they hadn't done this sort of thing. And they knew that.

LYDON: How do you feel about the fact that only a few people can see the material that you've assembled? It's a restricted viewing.

MCCARTHY: That does sadden me, as a student of history and someone who enjoys these personalities for what they are. But I must say, I whipped around here from cleaning a case just to be able to talk to you in hopes that I could share it with a bigger audience. So, while I have to be selfish out of security constraints, I try very hard to share it when I can.

LYDON: Well, Linda McCarthy, thank you very, very much.

MCCARTHY: It was my pleasure.

You folks read about John Ford. He's a fascinating fellow.

FORD [narrating film]: At 7:55 A.M., hell broke loose, man-made hell, made in Japan.

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LYDON: Though the CIA exhibit isn't open to the public, Ford's Oscar-winning OSS film, "December 7th," was released in its original form on videocassette last year. The full-length film had been banned by the Navy as a security risk for 50 years.

# RADIO TV REPORTS

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5

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