

The Congressional Country Club  
Virginia, USA

The OSS Society

You all know what admiration I hold for my father William Patrick Clark. Until this day of September 24, 2005, I had no idea of what he had accomplished in his life.

This evening I had been part of a celebration of the remaining few of the original members of the Office of Strategic Services, General "Wild Bill" Donovan's organization of American spies, intelligence officers and "behind the lines" heroes of World War II. Yes, I knew my father was one of these and had served years undercover in Belgium and finally wound up that war in Aachen, Germany on the day that Armistice was signed.

Until this evening I had no idea what lonely courage that had taken.

Tonight I attended as a new member of the OSS Society, their 63rd Anniversary Reunion that honors their fabled leader, General Donovan. There were, amazing to me, about 40 survivors of that illustrious cadre attending, all in their late 70's or early 80's. There was one sprightly fellow of 91, in a wheel chair pushed by a grandson, but able to see, hear, talk and laugh with the best of them.

There were only a few of the first volunteers for the beginning OSS from 1942. My father would have been somewhere between 108 and 112 years old had he survived. Those attending the dinner had been mostly 18 and 19 year old non-coms from Signal Battalions, recruited into the 101<sup>st</sup> Burma Detachment. (I had no idea that the OSS worked in Asia?)

Each survivor held Donovan in the greatest respect and esteem. What a leader he must have been. There were about 200 folks at the dinner, all linear descendents of the original glorious few. I was the second newest member, having learned that membership in this illustrious Society was open to the family members of their band of brothers only a month before from the Internet. They hold this celebration every other year and their numbers are dwindling obviously.

The guest speakers at this dinner showed the utmost veneration of their service to our country. The Honorable Porter J. Goss, Director of the CIA was the honored speaker, introduced by Ambassador Hugh Montgomery. The Honorable William H. Webster, former head of both the

CIA and the FBI was awarded the William J. Donovan award. Past recipients of that award include former Presidents Bush and Reagan, William Casey, William Colby, Margaret Thatcher, Admiral Lord Mountbatten, and Ralph Bunche. The OSS Distinguished Service Award was presented to Peter Lutken, one of their own.

This was heady company! I felt I was breathing rarified air! Amazingly, I was treated with some veneration – and felt more than undeserving! My dinner partner was Major General John K. Singlaub, an original member of the OSS, later Chief of the Armed Forces under President Jimmy Carter. He resigned that post in protest of Carter's long ago cuts in to the Armed forces. Today, General Singlaub heads many oversight Committees for our government.

I remembered General Singlaub's name and his face seemed familiar. Had I met him somewhere before in my travels? But no, I finally realized he reminded me of Yoda from Star Wars. He is short, with that same square face, pointed chin – and even the ears! When you look in his pale grey eyes, you see a phenomenal intelligence looking back at you. Eerie? Yes, indeed. These people were phenomenal then, and remain so now.

Of course none of the 101st Burma Detachment folks would remember my father so I attempted to sort out the few from the European Group. The most knowledgeable was a Frenchman, raised in the United States who had joined the U.S. Armed Forces and finally wound up in the OSS because of this language skills. What a fascinating fellow.

So I asked, "Did you know my father?"

He asked, "What was his name?" "Well", I said, "William Patrick Clark."

"No, I mean what was his OSS name?"

"I guess something German", I replied. "No", he answered, "I mean his OSS name?? Of course I have no idea! So he asked, "Did you bring a photograph? We could remember him from that, but we wouldn't recognize him by his real name."

Ye gods. Those guys were really into the secret stuff. They wouldn't use their real names, even to each other, so as to protect their families back in the States from reprisal if they were captured. How far away those days seem today. And how many gave their lives for us at home during those deadly days. The grand atrium in the Headquarters building of the CIA at Langley is a most imposing entrance. All white marble with inlaid brass medallions in the floor. On the right wall is the

motto of the OSS with a brass star for each OSS member killed in WWII. On the left is a larger than life bronze statue of General Donovan. No other statues, portraits or decorations, only flags fly in this imposing, large and quiet area.

Finally I have put together an amazing tale which has gradually appeared out of bits and pieces, like shadowy clues of a mystery.

The French OSS veteran asked me "How did your father get to Belgium? Perhaps that would give me an idea who he was."

Well, I have no idea. Did it ever dawn on me to ask? Did Father ever say? No. He never talked at all. Pierre hazarded that he had jumped into Belgium.

I said, "No, father was a pilot. I cannot see him jumping out of a plane at 500 feet into Belgium and never saying a word about it!" So perhaps he landed on the coast and gradually, over the next years made it to Achaean on the border of France and Germany? Who knows? I will have to wait two years until the next Anniversary Reunion. Perhaps I can use the Internet to find out more? There are extensive archives in College Park, MD, they say.

Maybe one of you, my family will some day have time to research those files for the story. Your grandfather was quite a man and his grit and steel and survival savvy are all part of each of you.

Here is part of an amazing story that I have finally pieced together. There were four or my immediate family and early friends in my life that were a part of the OSS and their amazing exploits. And none ever talked. None of those people ever talked until their 70's or 80's they told me at the reunion.

My father, after WWI went to Boston and was a stock broker of some sort at Lee Higgins and Sons. In 1929 the market crashed and we had prohibition. Somewhere along the way, he met Bill Donovan, a WWI well known veteran. They became acquainted either then or while Father was rum running Canadian Club whiskey for Joe Kennedy.

Now fast forward to the repeal of prohibition. Father is now Town Treasurer of Westport, Conn. and also the Treasurer of the Merchants Bank in Norwalk. He is divorced and living on his 42' yawl the "Audax" at the town marina (known as the Compo Yacht Club) which he had built. He has one of my classmates, Bobby Leary, living on the boat with him and doing odd jobs of upkeep after school. (As you know, Bobby is my half-

brother, but I was 50 years old or so before I finally figured that out.) At the time bobby is about 10 or 11 years old.

Now fast forward again. I am 16 and a good sailor and a Girl Scout Mariner. I have a chance to be the third mate on the 92' schooner "Yankee" that is jitneying little Girl Scout Mariners for a week at a time around the coast of Maine and Cape Cod. A fabulous couple, Irving and Exy Johnson own the boat and have been taking folks around the world on the Yankee for a year or two and are now renting the boat to the Girl Scouts while awaiting their first child. The first mate this summer is Sterling Hayden, soon to be a movie actor, but that summer just an impossibly handsome, reserved, sailor who remained aloof from the hurly burly of little sea scouts learning to tie knots and throw up their breakfast to leeward.

Again fast forward to the following summer when Sterling is now in Hollywood and my half brother Bobby has left the US Coast Guard Academy to sign on the Yankee as first mate in his place.

Does this seem strange to either of us? How are we the two luckiest people in the United States to get these chances that others would die for? No, we never give it a thought>

Now let's go back a two years. Two of the passengers that Skipper taken on part of one of his world cruises were the wife and young son of Bill Donovan. They became friends and Father was a friend of Bill Donovan.

These were second or third generation Irish and stuck together in those days. In his search for a replacement for Sterling had Skipper asked Bill Donovan for advice? Who knows? But hose folks stuck together. Was it a coincidence that many years later my father suggested a house to rent on Lookout Drive from a retired Navy Admiral a hero from the battle of Leyte Gulf? Which was also 2 houses from a retired General named Donovan?

Who knows? Your guess is as good as mine but too many coincidences in one lifetime mean something else is at work. But these guys never talked. Now back to WWII.

Pearl Harbor is bombed. Father enlists the next day in the Army Air Corps and winds up as a Major at Foster Field, Victoria, Texas as an instructor of young kids to fly fighters. Father is not happy. He wants to go overseas. They tell him "Bill, you're too dame old." Yikes!

Bobby is in Sri Lanka on the Yankee half way around the world. The Yankee has a German cook aboard and all the rest of the trip would be in occupied Axis territory so they return to Hawaii. Bobby is commissioned a Lieutenant in the Coast guard and becomes a hard-hat diver. For years people would say that the Coast Guard did not have hard hat divers until about four years ago when I found out they sure did. There is a school for them in Washington, DC on the Anacosta side of the Potomac.

So I always thought Bobby did his diving, raising the destroyers and other ship that were sunk at Pearl Harbor. When Kevin, Sandy and I had dinner with Bobby in Hawaii about four or five years ago, Bobby said, (after one too many mai tais) "No, I never dove at Pearl Harbor, I was with Skipper blowing coral atolls in the far Pacific to make safe harbors for the supply ships carrying the Seabees to build the landing strips for our planes as they were hopping toward Japan." Oh, Lord. Of course. No one knew the South Pacific like Skipper and Bobby. Skipper was apparently part of that OSS and Bobby, as a Lieutenant in the Coast Guard was attached to that group although (probably) not part of the OSS?

And where is our movie star, Sterling Hayden? He had married a beautiful English star, Madeline Carroll, and had signed up as an ambulance driver in France long before Pearl Harbor and while London was being bombed by the V2 rockets. Then came Dunkirk and Sterling disappeared. Was he killed in France? Did he get out at Dunkirk? No one knew.

Kevin, the professional tourist and museum goer, found an entire room at the OSS museum dedicated to Sterling Hayden who spent the War in the OSS. I learned at my dinner at the Anniversary Reunion that Sterling's OSS name was Capt. John Hamilton. Now what was my father's name?

If you count my step brother's Leonard's wonderful wife Jessie, who spent her WWII days in the catacombs below Fort DeRussey in Hawaii breaking code, that is five of my close friends and relatives in the spy and intelligence business. Talk about secrets only partially unraveled. There has to be a great story buried somewhere in here. But it will probably never be discovered, more's the pity. Maybe some day one of you can puzzle it out. My chance is probably left too late. You know "Old too soon, smart too late."

Here's to my Dad. A real man and a real hero.

## 21 CENTURY TIME

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21st century Disaster Readiness and Response. is About TIME

The 21st Century runs on TIME, no longer on Distance. Do you care if I am typing this in Santa Barbara and you are in Boston? Of course not. Disaster planning on the ground has been traditionally (and today continues to be subconsciously) planned on distance. Yes, yes, I know Time and Distance but yesterday it was miles that wagged the dog. Logistics are thought of in miles to go. OK for everyone from Napoleon through Paul Revere and up until the Valdez oil spill. (My designated change point, You may have another.)

Now we have the technical capability to site us 2 seconds apart. John Gargett, our NIUSR Chief of Operations, reminded me of the old tale of the Cavalry Lieut. and the Indian Scout.

"How far is it to Indian Wells?" asked the Lt.

" 2 days" says the Scout

" Hell, I can see the rock formation from here."

"Yes, but is deep canyon. Go down, Big river, Cross river, Go up canyon wall. 2 Days."

Readiness is now TIME on scene, or to staging area. TIME from point to point. We will be hitting this change **in thinking** (it doesn't need any change in the system) just change in the dimension. Easy now we recognize it. Press on, lois