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Spycraft

Robert Wallace and H Keith Melton with
Henry Robert Schlesinger

About the Book

Secret instructions written in invisible ink
Cigarettes that fire bullets
Insect-sized flying spy cameras
Listening devices hidden in the family cat

If these sound like the creations of James Bond's gadget-master Q, think again. They are all real-life devices used by the CIA's Office of Technical Services.

Spycraft is the first book ever written about this ultra-secretive department. It tells the amazing life-and-death stories about this little-known group, many of which have never before been revealed.

Against the backdrop of some of the most critical international events of recent years – including the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the war on terror – the authors show the real technical and human story of how the CIA carried out its most secret missions.

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SPYCRAFT

Inside the CIA's Top Secret Spy Lab

Robert Wallace and H. Keith Melton
with Henry R. Schlesinger

BANTAM BOOKS
LONDON • TORONTO • SYDNEY • AUCKLAND • JOHANNESBURG

For the families of TSS, TSD, and OTS
who served their country with patience,
courage, and honor through quiet,
unheralded support of the Spytechs

Office of Technical Service crest, 2001

Foreword

by GEORGE J. TENET
Director, Central Intelligence
1997–2004

MINUTES BEFORE I was to deliver the keynote speech at CIA Headquarters recognizing the fiftieth anniversary of the Office of Technical Service (OTS) on September 7, 2001, I was unavoidably called away to a meeting downtown. What I had prepared to say to the several hundred OTS officers gathered that morning would seem prescient ninety-six hours later when al-Qaeda struck the American homeland. Those words remain appropriate today as our nation confronts terrorism on every continent. For five decades, OTS officers and their wondrous devices had played a vital role in virtually every major CIA clandestine operation. In the words of Jim Pavitt, our Deputy Director for Operations during my tenure, OTS was the "technical problem solver for what appears impossible."

CIA's Office of Technical Service was established in 1951 at the beginning of the Cold War to meet a threat very different from the one America faces today. Throughout the next fifty years, OTS fashioned a history of adapting brilliantly to the challenge of applying new technology to the intelligence needs of each era. Whether CIA operations required an ultraminiature camera, a battery the size of a fingernail, or travel documents with unique inks and

printing, OTS became the organization that did not just make magic, it made magic on demand.

In 1951, the future of the United States and Western democracy was confronted by an ideology of advancing communism sponsored by a nuclear-armed Soviet Union. In those uncertain times, leaders of the four-year-old CIA, DCI Walter Bedell Smith, his deputy Allen Dulles, and a promising operations officer, Richard Helms, envisioned technology as the means to secure a decisive intelligence advantage over the Soviet Union and its client states. Drawing on their collective World War II experiences in the Office of Strategic Services, they concluded that the best operations were a partnership between technical specialists and operations officers. The concept they enacted was simple and brilliant—CIA would apply the full force of America's technological ingenuity, whether sponsored by government or industry, to solve the problems of clandestine operations. From that idea, the Technical Services Staff emerged and its successes became legendary.

Now some of the previously untold stories of the impact on our intelligence history by this remarkable collection of people and technology can be told. Every CIA director confronts the tension between secrecy and the American public's right to know what its government is doing. Secrets are the necessary currency of the intelligence profession and protection of confidential sources and special methods is a solemn duty of every CIA officer. Regrettably, there have been instances when secrecy was invoked to deny knowledge of information that has long since lost sensitivity but is vital for public understanding and consideration. Such misuse of secrecy can result in flawed policy decisions, wild speculation about the CIA's activities, and a misleading historical record. For the CIA to maintain the public trust, responsible and accurate

presentation of information on intelligence subjects is both wise and necessary.

The thousands of books and news articles produced about the CIA's operations have generally concentrated on large technical programs, such as the U-2 spy plane, satellites and communications intercepts, or spies who worked for the CIA or against American interests. In spy episodes, the technical equipment, an essential element of agent operations, is often obscured by the drama and action surrounding the human characters. Little attention had been given to the technological origins of the gadgets or the people who made them. *Spycraft* now presents this well-told story in a long overdue tribute to the previously unrecognized contributions to U.S. intelligence of an eclectic, talented collection of scientists, engineers, craftsmen, artists, and technicians. *Spycraft* is a history of the CIA's fusion of technical innovation with classic tradecraft and, equally, a call to young men and women with similar talents to enlist in the battle against America's new enemies.

The authors of *Spycraft* have been my associates and friends for many years. Together they bring a career of operational experience and a lifetime of study of intelligence to this work. During my tenure as DCI, Robert Wallace headed the Office of Technical Service after serving more than twenty-five years as an Agency operations officer and manager. Throughout his thirty-two-year career, he received multiple awards for operational success and leadership. H. Keith Melton has been a friend of the CIA for more than two decades. He is a frequent lecturer throughout the intelligence community, a best selling author, and an internationally recognized collector and interpreter of historical intelligence technical devices and artifacts.

My draft of September 7, 2001, remarks concluded with the the observation that "the twenty-first century will

present major challenges to our Agency and OTS ingenuity will be put to the test in the years ahead." The test began four days later. In the months that followed 9/11, the CIA again turned to OTS for technical innovation to build the gadgets that would detect and defeat a different and deadly enemy operating in an information environment revolutionized by the Internet and digital technology. *Spycraft,* whether detailing Cold War operations or those directed against terrorists, offers a somber warning to our adversaries and fresh encouragement to those who cherish freedom that we will prevail.

Preface

THE CIA'S NEW Deputy Director for Operations, David Cohen, called me to his office in August 1995. "I want you to apply for the job of Deputy Director, Office of Technical Service in the DS&T [Directorate of Science and Technology]," Cohen directed. "We need a DO [Directorate of Operations] person there and I think you're a good candidate."

He might as well have suggested that I apply for NASA's astronaut program. I had been an operations officer for almost twenty-five years, but for the past eighteen months I was assigned to the Comptroller's office. At age fifty-one, I was out of operations, doing the type of staff and budget work that motivated me to plan for early retirement.

"I've never worked in the DS&T. I'm a history–political science major, an operations type. I'm an analog guy in a digital world. I don't even change the oil in my car," I objected.

"I know what your skills are and this is a good assignment for you." Cohen left no doubt about the answer he wanted.

"Okay, I'll apply, but I can't imagine I'll be competitive if there are other candidates."

"There'll be other candidates and you'll do fine. We need a DO officer in OTS who knows senior ops people and is someone I have confidence in. You've been looking at the budgets in every DO division almost two years, so you know

the key players and they know you. I have to make sure technical service and operations stay linked."

The interview was over. I had worked for Cohen several years earlier and recalled his frequent admonition that once a decision was made he had no patience for further discussion. This was not the first time that he had directed me to a job I had not sought, and the others had worked out pretty well. In 1988, he sent me to a large station that had never been on my assignment wish list. That put me into position to join the ranks of the CIA's Senior Intelligence Service. Three years later he ordered me back to Headquarters to serve as a division-level resource manager. Since I had spent the previous eighteen years in various field stations, this responsibility introduced me to a previously unknown world of billion-dollar budgets and the Agency's senior leadership.

Six weeks following the conversation with Cohen, after separate interviews with the Executive Director, Nora Slatkin, and the Deputy Director for Science and Technology, Dr. Ruth David, both recent appointees to their positions, I became Deputy Director, OTS.[1] Evidently, they agreed with Cohen that the job required a breadth of operational and management experience more than a technical degree.

"OTS is America's 'Q,' sort of," said "Roy," in welcoming me to the office and offering no apology for the reference to the gadget master of James Bond movies. Roy had spent his first ten years at OTS in the forgery shop working as a "document authenticator," making certain that CIA-produced travel and alias-identity documents were flawless in print type, color, design, and paper texture. Now, as a senior staff officer for Robert Manners, the Director of OTS, he had drawn the task of providing the new guy with a much-needed *CliffsNotes* version of the office. "I say 'sort of,'" Roy continued, "because, unlike the movies, if one of our visas doesn't pass muster at an immigration

checkpoint, or one of our concealments accidentally opens and spills its contents, we can't reshoot the scene. If people are arrested or get killed because of our mistakes, they stay in jail for a long time or they really die."

Roy also made it clear that America's "Q" consisted of not one scientific genius or a handful of eccentric inventors, but a large contingent of technical officers, engineers, scientists, technicians, craftsmen, artists, and social scientists deployed throughout the world and cross-trained in operational tradecraft. OTS had a hand in every aspect of the CIA's spy gear from design and development through testing, deployment, and maintenance.

"Now, this is what's really important," Roy said, beginning the comprehensive briefing with a slow, deliberate delivery that conveyed no-nonsense seriousness. "We consider ourselves part of the Directorate of Operations as much as a part of the DS&T. What ever the DO stations and case officers need for technical support, we do everything in our power to deliver. When we go to the field to do a job, there's no question who we work for—the chief of station."

Roy explained that the techs did much more than build and deliver spy gear. "Usually we are right there with the case officer or the agent, at the user's side in the operation. We train agents, install equipment, test systems, and repair stuff that breaks. We take the same risks as case officers—share the same emotion of accomplishment or otherwise. Over the course of his career, the tech becomes involved in more operations and meets more agents than many case officers."

Roy described OTS's five primary organizational elements, or "groups," as these were designated. The largest was a covert communications, or "covcom," group with a name that described its function. This group developed systems for agents and case officers to communicate covertly and securely. Secret writing, short-

range radio, subminiature cameras, special film, high-frequency broadcasts, satellite communications, and microdots were all included in covcom. A second OTS group designed and deployed audio bugs, telephone taps, and visual surveillance systems. These techs were often on the road up to fifty percent of the time, traveling from country to country, as their services were required. The third group, called on for special missions that may include support to paramilitary operations, included a mixture of technical and "soft science" capabilities. This group produced tracking devices and sensors, conducted weapons training and analysis, analyzed foreign espionage equipment, performed operational psychological assessments, and built special-use batteries. Roy came from a fourth group that made disguises and "reproduced" documents. Its work in creating counterfeit travel documents could be traced directly back to a predecessor organization in the Office of Strategic Services. Rounding out OTS were the concealments and electronics fabrication laboratories, known collectively as Station III, and a field structure with regional bases in South America, Europe, and Asia.[2]

Roy's briefing supplemented my prior knowledge of OTS from two recent assignments, one operational and the other administrative. For two years in the early 1990s, I served as Deputy Chief for the CIA's nonofficial cover (NOC) program. There I worked with OTS officers who support NOC officers with documentation, covert communications, disguise, identities, and concealments to assure the NOCs were never identified with the U.S. government. The OTS provided the equipment and documents that enabled NOCs to live a "normal" life as, say, a businessman, freelance photographer, scientist, or rice merchant while engaging in their clandestine work for the Agency.

In the Comptroller's Office, I encountered OTS from the perch of a budget weenie.[3] Beginning in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Comptroller had the unenviable task of managing a declining CIA budget at a time when operations officers were, in reality, being pressed by demands for new, better, and faster intelligence on counterproliferation, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics. OTS, like other components of the CIA, struggled to absorb the impact of reduced budgets without any reduction in demands for spy gear.

For the next three years as OTS Deputy Director or Acting Director, I would deal firsthand with the damage that the budget cuts of the 1990s did to the CIA's countersurveillance systems, advanced power sources, technical counterintelligence capabilities, and paramilitary-related weapons and training.[4] Then, beginning in 1999, as new resources began to be available, I would have the opportunity as Director to lead OTS in creating and reconstituting capabilities for the twenty-first century.

From its formation in 1951, OTS concentrated its efforts on creating devices and capabilities to improve the CIA's ability to identify, recruit, and securely handle clandestine agents. Whether the operational requirement needed research, development, engineering, production, training, or deployment, OTS responded. Motivated by a philosophy of limitless possibility, a few hundred technical specialists gave American intelligence its decisive technical advantage in the Cold War, a conflict that continues today in the worldwide battle against terrorists.

Collectively, the stories that form the OTS history convey a level of dedication and commitment by officers whose pride in their service to America was more important than personal wealth or individual acclaim. At their best, these experiences are models for successive generations of intelligence officers who would apply technology to agent operations. I cannot imagine a more rewarding

responsibility or an honor greater than working with this remarkable cadre of technical officers, successors to the rich heritage of OSS General William Donovan and his chief technical genius, New England chemist Stanley Lovell.

The genesis of *Spycraft* occurred during an afternoon-long conversation with John Aalto, a retired case officer, in San Antonio in February 1999. I had been appointed Director of the CIA's Office of Technical Service three months earlier. John had joined the CIA in 1950 and spent the next five decades in Soviet operations.

John took note of my recent appointment and with unexpected seriousness asked, "Do you have any concept of what OTS and its predecessor, the Technical Services Division, accomplished for operations?"

Before I could respond, John continued. "I tell you," he began, "it is because of the techs and TSD that we in Soviet operations eventually won the intelligence war against the KGB in Moscow. And to my knowledge, no one has ever recorded that story, officially or unofficially."

Over the next three hours John described a remarkable inventory of TSD devices, technologies, inventions, gadgets, and tricks that he and others used in Moscow and throughout the Iron Curtain countries during the forty-year Cold War. He recounted fascinating tales about the leadership of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, the cleverness of the TSD engineers, the inventiveness of the field techs, and the determination shared by TDS and Soviet Division case officers to break the stranglehold of the KGB on the CIA's operations in Moscow.

"You should do something," John urged, "to get this story recorded before all of us who were involved are gone and the inevitable organizational changes at CIA obscure this history."

Two years earlier I had met H. Keith Melton, a lifelong student of intelligence history and private collector of espionage devices and equipment. Keith lent the Agency

hundreds of artifacts from his private collection of espionage equipment for display during the CIA's fiftieth anniversary in 1997. Subsequently, I assisted Keith in transforming the display into a permanent Cold War exhibit in CIA's Original Headquarters Building. On September 7, 2001, OTS celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a gala dinner highlighted by Keith's presentation of the international history of spy gadgets and technical espionage.

Shortly after I retired, Keith and I had dinner during one of his visits to Washington. As we shared our admiration of the creativity and courage of the engineers and technical officers whom we had come to know, Keith asked if I had considered writing an account of my tenure as OTS Director. I had not, but his question reminded me of John Aalto's admonition four years earlier and sparked the idea of writing a public history of OTS from the accounts of retired technical officers. It would be a true espionage story that, combined with Keith's wealth of knowledge and images of historical spy gear, could be a valuable addition to intelligence literature. Keith agreed, and *Spycraft* was born.

We understood the obligations from my CIA employment to submit writing about intelligence subjects to the Agency for prepublication review to preclude the inadvertent release of classified information. I anticipated no particular difficulties with such review. Before beginning the project, I met with the CIA's Publications Review Board, outlined the concept, and received encouragement to proceed. In July 2004, the board approved a detailed outline of a proposed "popular account of OTS adventures and contributions to U.S. intelligence" along with the two sample chapters we had submitted. Relying on that approval, we contracted with Dutton, an imprint of Penguin USA, for publication, with full expectation of delivering a properly Agency-reviewed manuscript in late 2005. We submitted our 774-

page manuscript under the title *An Uncommon Service*, to the board on September 6, 2005. Agency regulations specify manuscripts are to be reviewed within thirty days.

After six months, on March 13, 2006, the board issued us a letter stating: "except for Chapters 1–3 your manuscript is inappropriate for disclosure in the public domain." The Agency had approved only the first thirty-four pages, all of which discussed equipment from the Office of Strategic Service (OSS) World War II inventory. The 740 "inappropriate" pages included the previously approved detailed outline and sample chapters. No specific classified material was identified. Rather, the Agency applied a previously discredited "mosaic theory" of redaction, contending that a compilation of unclassified information becomes classified when written by someone at my senior level. The board's letter asserted that "in the aggregate the manuscript provides so much information … it would be of immense value to our adversaries." There seemed to be no awareness that adversaries read English and have the same Internet access and Google tools we used in our research.

During my previous seven years with OTS, I reviewed several books and articles as part of the Agency's prepublication review process. In preparing this manuscript, I exercised the same conscientious judgment regarding potentially classified information as I had done as a government employee. In its attempt to prevent the authors from publishing *Spycraft*, the March 2006 letter revealed the Agency's apparent unwillingness to distinguish between responsible writing on intelligence subjects and unauthorized leaks of classified information.

With the assistance of attorney Mark Zaid, we filed an appeal two weeks later. Such appeals, according to Agency regulations, would be adjudicated by the CIA's Executive Director within thirty days of receipt.

We received no response to our appeal for eight months. Mid-level officers of the bureaucracy took no action in what

appeared to be an attempt to deny publication by causing an indefinite delay. Faced with the unwillingness of the Agency to conduct a review consistent with its prepublication policies, we prepared to seek relief in federal court. In the opinion of our legal counsel, the Agency's refusal to honor its own regulations, coupled with the capricious deletions of unclassified material from the manuscript, constituted a violation of First Amendment Constitutional rights.

Before taking the legal step, we made a personal request to the CIA's Associate Deputy Director in December 2006 for intervention. As a result, on February 8, 2007, we were advised that another review had reduced objections to approximately fifty of the manuscript's pages. Further, the board offered to reconsider the remaining deletions if the authors could demonstrate the material was not classified. Although we believe none of the disputed material is classified, as an accommodation, we revised certain passages and deleted some terminology that the CIA considered operationally sensitive. On July 18, 2007, we received approval to publish virtually all of the original manuscript.

The best that can be said of the experience is that Agency management eventually recognized a need to reform its prepublication policy and repair the broken review process. A historical irony is that William Hood encountered a similarly recalcitrant bureaucracy in 1981 when writing *Mole*, an account from the 1950s of the Soviet spy Pytor Popov.[5] "Every word in this manuscript is classified," said the initial CIA review. Twenty-five years later, *Mole* is now recognized as an espionage classic.[6]

THE FIRST FIVE sections of *Spycraft* recount remarkable stories of ingenuity, skill, and courage throughout the first fifty years of OTS history. Section VI presents the doctrine of clandestine tradecraft from the perspective of espionage

historian H. Keith Melton and includes a chapter devoted to the revolutionary changes digital technology has brought to spy work.

We wrestled from the beginning with the difficulties of when to present necessary explanations of the operational doctrine behind the technical topics that appear in the text. The impracticality of repeating explanations each time a technical topic appeared became quickly obvious. Lengthy footnotes also seemed more likely to distract rather than enlighten the reader.

Therefore, we consolidated into Section VI the five essential elements of clandestine operations used by every intelligence service regardless of nationality or culture. These chapters, drawn from Melton's widely acclaimed lectures, writings, and exhibits, set out the basic principles underlying technical support to operations. These principles transcend any specific service and represent knowledge common and available to intelligence professionals and civilians alike from print, electronic, and film media. The individual chapters will aid the reader in understanding the basic philosophy and principles of assessment, cover, concealments, surveillance, and covert communications as practiced by professional services. Readers have the option of diving directly into the OTS story and the development of CIA's clandestine spy gear in Chapters 1–19 or first immersing themselves with the doctrine and terminology of espionage operations presented in Chapters 20–25.

Spycraft combines the experiences and lore of the techs based on the authors' personal interviews and correspondence with nearly one hundred engineers, technical operations officers, and case officers. We verified specific details to the extent possible by collaboration with public material and multiple primary sources. The names of several individuals quoted by the authors throughout the book are changed as a matter of security, cover, or

requested privacy. Appendix E provides a list of pseudonyms the authors assigned to these officers. Otherwise, we use true names throughout.

We did not seek access to, or use, classified files. At times, the fallibility of memory may produce less than a perfectly accurate account of events many years past. In a few instances, we purposefully obscured facts to protect operational information, or omitted sensitive details for the same reason. For example, the locations of operations, except those in Moscow, the former Soviet Union, and other denied area countries, are regionalized. Some operational terms and Agency jargon that appear in works by other authors not bound by secrecy agreements have not been used at the request of the Agency.

Why do history? Two thousand years ago Cicero observed, “To be ignorant of what occurred before you is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of life unless it is woven into the lives of our ancestors by the records of history?” A twentieth-century view, as expressed by G. K. Chesterton, is: “In not knowing the past we do not know the present. History is a high point of vantage from which alone we can see the age in which we are living.” Richard Helms, who headed CIA operations in the early days of the Cold War and served as Director of Central Intelligence from 1967 to 1973, explained that he wrote *A Look Over My Shoulder* because it is “important that the American people understand why secret intelligence is an essential element of our national defense.”[7] Our hope is that *Spycraft* becomes a part of that legacy.

—RW

Official Message from the CIA

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE Agency requested the following message be included in *Spycraft*. To provide the reader a sense of the reality of covert communications, the authors have presented the message using a page from a one-time pad issued to Aleksandr Ogorodnik (*TRIGON*) in 1977. Chapter 8 presents the *TRIGON* story. Use the one-time pad (see here) and the instructions in Appendix F to decipher this message.

25886	14155	75126	50200	19082	18193	73799	86932
21351	10043	47273	79962	35859	31419	67511	71466
74048	43427	79468	17464	21551	05369	23777	57954
39206	81440	75115	34678	27628	64265	95474	68273
07454	30545	57041	64491	84617	37194	65182	32028
10856	42127	98147	08212	80461	19159	76906	96350
06801	03739	79616	59897	74718	88039	57655	43996
96548	60171	10516	80703	42355	55453	18959	54960
48072	34595	24879	89432	74811	30669	49194	06105
86431	91706	51389	41559	57081	45856	29817	88628
45609	60007	85961	33296	91619	73179	04316	16318
78511	63202	26270	04975	57067	87112	06824	18890
23476	00497	12853	10704	85157	82625	80302	39568
98740	89702	62880	27515	01159	00782	10019	09324
76309	62253	29920	93879	79588	50325	30160	63686
36758	94379	96557	55805	16400	36597	45151	17432
68270	84821	11592	28099	35403	73705	90023	31866
41596	83244	40964	59866	92175	01481	85834	93496
68589							

SECTION I

AT THE BEGINNING

CONFIDENTIAL 7 September 1951

1. Effective immediately the Operational Aids Division is redesignated the Technical Services Staff.

CHAPTER 1

My Hair Stood on End

The weapons of secrecy have no place in an ideal world.

—Sir William Stephenson, *A Man Called Intrepid*

ON A QUIET autumn evening in 1942, as World War II raged across Europe and Asia, two men sat in one of Washington's most stately homes discussing a type of warfare very different from that of high-altitude bombers and infantry assaults. The host, Colonel William J. Donovan, known as "Wild Bill" since his days as an officer during World War I, was close to sixty. A war hero whose valor had earned him the Medal of Honor, Donovan was now back in uniform.[1] Donovan responded to the call to duty and put aside a successful Wall Street law practice to become Director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and America's first spymaster.[2]

Donovan's guest, for whom he graciously poured sherry, was Stanley Platt Lovell.[3] A New Englander in his early fifties, Lovell was an American success story. Orphaned at an early age, he worked his way through Cornell University to ascend the ranks of business and science by sheer determination and ingenuity. As president of the Lovell

Chemical Company, he held more than seventy patents, though still described himself as a “sauce pan chemist.”

Donovan understood that the fight against the Axis powers required effective intelligence operations along with a new style of clandestine warfare. Just as important, he appreciated the role men like Lovell could play in those operations. “I need every subtle device and every underhanded trick to use against the Germans and the Japanese—by our own people—but especially by the underground in the occupied countries,” he had told Lovell a few days earlier. “You’ll have to invent them all … because you’re going to be my man.”[4]

The wartime job offered to the mild-mannered chemist was to head the Research and Development (R&D) Branch of the OSS, a role Donovan compared to that of Professor Moriarty, the criminal mastermind of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories.[5] Lovell, although initially intrigued by the offer, was now having doubts and came to Donovan’s Georgetown home to express those reservations.[6] He had been in government service since that spring at a civilian agency called the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC). Created by President Roosevelt at the urging of a group of prominent scientists and engineers, the NDRC’s mission was to look into new weapons for what seemed to be America’s inevitable entry into the war. Lovell had joined the NDRC to act as liaison—a bridge—between the military, academics, and business.[7] But what Donovan proposed now was something altogether different.

The mantle of Professor Moriarty was, at best, a dubious distinction. An undisputed genius, the fictional Moriarty earned the grudging respect of Holmes by secretly ruling a vast criminal empire of London’s underworld with brutal efficiency and ingenuity. In his role as Professor Moriarty of the OSS, Lovell would oversee the creation of a clandestine arsenal that would include everything from satchel

concealments to carry secret documents and subminiature spy cameras to specialized weapons and explosives. These were the weapons to be used in a war fought not by American troops in uniform, but by soldiers of underground resistance movements, spies, and saboteurs.

Spying and sabotage were unfamiliar territory for both America and Lovell, who had made his fortune developing chemicals for shoe and clothing manufacturers. America, Lovell believed, did not resort to the subterfuge of espionage or the mayhem of sabotage. When the United States looked into the mirror of its own mythology, it did not see spies skulking in the shadows of back alleys; instead, it saw men like Donovan, who faced the enemy in combat on the front lines.

"The American people are a nation of extroverts. We tell everything and rather glory in it," he explained to Donovan. "A Professor Moriarty is as un-American as sin is unpopular at a revival meeting. I'd relish the assignment, Colonel, but dirty tricks are simply not tolerated in the American code of ethics."[8]

Donovan, as Lovell would later write, answered succinctly. "Don't be so goddamn naïve, Lovell. The American public may profess to think as you say they do, but the one thing they expect of their leaders is that we be smart," the colonel lectured. "Don't kid yourself. P. T. Barnum is still a basic hero because he fooled so many people. They will applaud someone who can outfox the Nazis and the Japs. … Outside the orthodox warfare system is a great area of schemes, weapons, and plans which no one who knows America really expects us to originate because they are so un-American, but once it's done, an American will vicariously glory in it. That is your area, Lovell, and if you think America won't rise in applause to what is so easily called 'un-American' you're not my man."[9]

Lovell took the job. Donovan knew what he wanted, but even more important, he knew what was needed.[10] He had

toured the secret labs of Great Britain that created just such devices. He also maintained close ties with the British Security Coordination (BSC), England's secretive intelligence organization in North America, through which the United States was already funneling weapons to assist in the war effort. Even the mention of Sherlock Holmes's ruthless criminal adversary may not have been a chance literary allusion. Two years earlier, in 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signed into existence the Special Operations Executive (SOE) with the instructions "Now go out and set Europe ablaze!"[11] SOE's mandate was unconventional warfare, including the arming of resistance fighters in the war against Germany. Its London headquarters was an undistinguished office building on Baker Street, the same street as Sherlock Holmes's fictional address.

Although Donovan eventually persuaded Lovell to join the OSS, the chemist's initial assessment of the American public's dim view toward espionage was not unfounded. From the beginning, the idea of an American intelligence service was controversial. One senator proclaimed, "Mr. Donovan is now head of the Gestapo in the United States."[12] In the best tradition of Washington's bureaucratic infighting, the person in charge of the State Department's Passport Office, Mrs. Ruth Shipley, insisted on stamping "OSS" on the passports of Donovan's personnel traveling overseas, making them perhaps the most well-documented secret agents in the history of espionage. To remedy the situation, which had reached a deadlock between the OSS and the State Department, FDR himself had to intervene on the young agency's behalf with the stubborn Mrs. Shipley.[13]

The media of the day was no more charitable, often treating the OSS dismissively. The Washington columnist Drew Pearson called the nascent spy agency "one of the fanciest groups of dilettante diplomats, Wall Street bankers, and amateur detectives ever seen in

Washington."[14] More colorful phrases were penned by Washington's *Times-Herald* society columnist, Austine Cassini, who breathlessly wrote:

> *If you should by chance wander in the labyrinth of the OSS you'd behold ex–polo players, millionaires, Russian princes, society gambol boys, scientists and dilettante detectives. All of them are now at the OSS, where they used to be allocated between New York, Palm Beach, Long Island, Newport and other Meccas frequented by the blue bloods of democracy. And the girls! The prettiest, best-born, snappiest girls who used to graduate from debutantedom to boredom now bend their blonde and brunette locks, or their colorful hats, over work in the OSS, the super-ultra-intelligence-counter-espionage outfit that is headed by brilliant "Wild Bill" Donovan.*[15]

Cassini made it all sound like good clean fun. A bastion of pampered blue bloods, the OSS seemed no more dangerous than a country club cotillion. But at a time when less privileged sons and husbands were fighting and dying in the South Pacific and North Africa, the levity in the words "gambol boys" and "dilettante detectives" was almost assuredly bitter reading for many. Not surprisingly, the organization's acronym was soon transformed into the less than flattering "Oh So Social" by career military officers and draftees alike. The fact that an early OSS training facility was based at the plush Congressional Country Club, located just outside Washington, only served to reinforce the notion of privilege and elitism.[16]

If OSS seemed a bastion of aristocrats and bankers, it was not without reason. Donovan worked on Wall Street in the days leading up to World War II. When he became Coordinator of Information (COI), an OSS predecessor, in 1941, Donovan staffed the organization from circles with