

Legion Recognizes Sir William Stephenson Honour



Written by Bruce Forsyth

Published in The Maple Leaf

Branch 637, The Sir William Stephenson Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, officially recognized the induction of the late Sir William Stephenson as an honorary member of the US Army Military Intelligence Corps May 2

Sir William, a Canadian, is thought of by many in the intelligence world as the ultimate spymaster. He founded Special Training School #103, a.k.a. "Camp X", considered to be the finest espionage training camp of the Second World War era.

Agents from the US intelligence services expressed an interest in sending personnel for training at Camp X.

Even before the camp officially opened December 6, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, agents from the FBI and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), including OSS head Colonel William Donovan, secretly attended Camp X. In the process, he also became British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill's personal representative to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Mr. Donovan would later credit Sir William with teaching US agents everything they knew about foreign intelligence gathering. The CIA named its recruit training facility "The Farm", a nod to the farm that originally existed at the Camp X site.

The praise continued in 1946, when Sir William received the Presidential Medal for Merit, the first non-US citizen to do so, for his valuable assistance to the US in intelligence and special operations.

The fact that Sir William had not been officially recognized by the US Army Intelligence Corps for his work has been corrected by Major-General John M. Custer, Commandant of the US Army Intelligence Corps. MGen Custer inducted Sir William as an honorary member of the US Army Intelligence Corps, an honour shared by only two other non- Americans.

Donna Bunting, President of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 637, received a certificate issued by MGen Custer at an event attended by Royal Canadian Legion Provincial President George O'Dair, Deputy Zone Commander Lorraine Duncan and members of various veterans associations. Guest speaker Lieutenant- Colonel David Rubin, honorary lieutenant colonel of 2 Intelligence Company, addressed the gathering, recalling his dealings with Sir William.

Nothing remains of Camp X. The former site is now Intrepid Park, a nod to Sir William's code name, where a monument, erected in 1984, honours the men and women of Camp X.

Last Updated (Tuesday, 07 July 2009)