



MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)



NEWS RELEASE

TODAY WE RECOGNIZE THE
76TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA)
AND WE CELEBRATE THE LIFE ACHIEVEMENTS
OF SIR WILLIAM SAMUEL STEPHENSON

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

**OTTAWA, WINNIPEG,
TODAY** – Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and Chief Executive Officer, Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP); Mr. Ralph Mahar, National Chair, Honours and Recognition, RCMP Veterans's Association; and, Mr. Dwight MacAulay, CVO, President, Intrepid Society of Winnipeg, recognized the 76th anniversary of the founding of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), paid tribute to the fallen, and celebrated the life achievements of Sir William Samuel Stephenson.



On July 26, 1947, President Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States (1945–1953) signed the [National Security Act of 1947](#). The CIA officially came into existence on September 18, 1947. In July 1974, the CIA dedicated a Memorial Wall with 31 stars to honour the fallen since the Agency's founding. Located inside the main entrance of the CIA Headquarters, in Langley, Virginia, the Memorial Wall now contains 140 stars. Also found at the headquarters is a statue honouring Sir William Stephenson.

Best known by his wartime intelligence code name "Intrepid," Sir William Samuel Stephenson, CC, MC, DFC (January 23, 1897 – January 31, 1989) was a Canadian soldier, airman, entrepreneur, inventor, spymaster, and the senior representative of British intelligence for the entire western hemisphere during the Second World War. Stephenson, who was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, played a key role in the creation of the CIA, realizing early on that America needed a strong intelligence organization and lobbied contacts close to President Roosevelt to appoint an American, William "Wild Bill" Donovan, who had gained the confidence of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, to oversee the FBI and military intelligence. The organization initially created was the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), later to become the CIA on September 18, 1947, and represented a revolutionary step in the history of American intelligence.

Many people believe Stephenson to also be the real-life inspiration for James Bond. Ian Fleming himself once wrote, “James Bond is a highly romanticized version of a true spy. The real thing is ... William Stephenson.”



(From left): Ralph Mahar and Stéphane Ouellette at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) National Memorial Cemetery, and Dwight MacAulay laying a wreath at the statue of Sir William Stephenson, Memorial Park, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Quotes

“Sir William Stephenson’s contributions to the success of the Allied war effort in defeating the Axis forces during World War Two were transformational in their impact. Particularly, as it relates to his liaison efforts, as head of the British Security Coordination office in New York City, that helped secure American material support for the UK during the war prior to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. His concurrent partnership during the war with the legendary Col. William Donovan, Chief of the CIA’s predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was instrumental in securing recognition by U.S. lawmakers on the need to establish a permanent post-war intelligence agency. The Central Intelligence Agency’s formal establishment on September 18, 1947 owes much to the Stephenson / Donovan wartime collaboration.

“Canada has benefitted tremendously from its partnership in the Five Eyes intelligence cooperation alliance first established in the 1940’s; a liaison cadre involving the security & intelligence agencies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The CIA has been and remains a critical ally in this essential group.

“The 140 stars carved into the Memorial Wall of the CIA’s headquarters in Langley, Virginia, attest to the dangers inherent in securing their nation’s security as each star is dedicated to a member who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. Their sacrifice is not forgotten.

“Sir William Stephenson’s own valiant service to Canada, as a decorated World War One veteran, and to Great Britain, as an accomplished World War Two era intelligence chief, also merit our acknowledgement, our thanks, and our respect. We will remember him.”

– Ralph Mahar, National Chair, Honours and Recognition, RCMP Veterans’ Association

"While it is doubtful that anyone will ever fully know or realize the accomplishments of Sir William Stephenson (Intrepid) in bringing the Second World War to a close, one fact is certain. His role was absolutely key to the success of the Allied cause.

"The Intrepid Society is also proud to support and recognize Sir William Stephenson's efforts resulting in the creation of the CIA on September 18, 1947. And, the ongoing recognition of Sept. 18th as a day to honour all those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the ever evolving world of espionage which has played a major role in securing the safety of the free world."

– Dwight MacAulay, CVO, President, Intrepid Society of Winnipeg

"Since its creation, the CIA has provided and continues to provide critical services to national and international intelligence efforts in battling terrorism, and organizations bent on destabilizing world peace and democratic governments. While this anniversary is often overlooked, it is a very important date to pause, reflect, and remember the brave men and women who have worked in the shadows and served their nation, and in many respects the world, in the cause of peace and freedom. In this way, we must always remember our duty to promote, defend, and enforce the principles and virtues for which they fought and died to uphold."

– Stéphane Ouellette, President & CEO, MNCTP

Associated Links

- [CIA Pays Tribute to its Fallen in Annual Memorial Ceremony | News Release | CIA | June 12, 2018](#)
- [Is James Bond 'the Most Famous Winnipegger of All Time'? | The Star | November 5, 2015](#)
- [The Quiet Canadian Spymaster that Inspired James Bond | Global News | November 4, 2015](#)
- [History of the CIA | Central Intelligence Agency](#)
- [The Intrepid Life of Sir William Stephenson | Central Intelligence Agency](#)
- [CIA Officers Memorial Foundation](#)
- [Intrepid Society of Winnipeg](#)

Contact Information

- Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP)
Stéphane Ouellette
President and Chief Executive Officer
E-mail: ouellettes@rogers.com
Website: www.alliedmerchantnavy.com
- RCMP Veterans's Association
Honours and Recognition
Ralph Mahar
National Chair
E-mail: rwmahar@hotmail.com
- The Intrepid Society of Winnipeg
Dwight MacAulay
President
E-mail: president@intrepid-society.org
Website: intrepid-society.org