

**MAJOR RENE J. DEFOURNEAUX
US ARMY, RETIRED (DECEASED)**



Rene Defourneaux was born in France in 1921 and immigrated to the United States in 1939. He volunteered for the US Army in 1943 and, because of his French language skills, he was sent to the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, to become an interrogator. On completion, he was shipped to Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and then quickly transferred to the British Army's Special Operations Executive (SOE) in London. After intensive training to conduct sabotage and subversion missions as well organize guerilla resistance, he was assigned to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) but under the operational control of the British.

After PVT Defourneaux was chosen for a mission within German-occupied France, he was discharged from the US Army and reported to Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant by SHAEF Commander General Dwight Eisenhower. On the night of August 8, 1944, 2LT Defourneaux was dropped into France, mistakenly some 20 miles from the intended site, but eventually joined his group of resistance organizers. Operating behind enemy lines for several months, he personally destroyed the bridge of Saint-Thibault on the Loire River and tricked the Germans into blowing another bridge, denying their use by German tanks to attack American Soldiers. Mission completed, 2LT Defourneaux returned to the US, where he received the Silver Star for his actions in France.

In April 1945, the OSS selected 2LT Defourneaux for an assignment in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. On April 31, 1945, he flew from Calcutta, India, to Kunming in the far southeast part of China. By May 16, he was second in command of the eight-member Deer Team tasked to train guerillas in French Indochina. To hide his French roots, he went by the cover name Raymond Douglas. On July 28, Defourneaux and the Deer Team parachuted into a jungle camp near Hanoi to link up with the resistance group led by Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap. Their mission was to train the group for guerilla operations against the Japanese and to collect intelligence for use against the Japanese in the waning days of World War II. After the war in the Pacific ended, Defourneaux again returned to the US and was discharged.

In November 1947, Defourneaux was recalled to active duty and assigned to the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC). He had assignments with the 109th CIC Detachment in Maryland, the 66th CIC Detachment in Germany, the 500th MI Group in Japan, the 113th

Intelligence Corps Group, and the Army Intelligence School at Fort Holabird. Many of his foreign assignments in Europe and Asia, especially in the Pacific, were highly classified and essentially unknown today.

Rene Defourneaux retired from the US Army as a Major in February 1965. In retirement, he wrote four books: *The Winking Fox*, *The Tracks of the Fox*, *The Raven Dropped His Cheese*, and *The Mark of the Buceros*. He passed away on April 1, 2010 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

MAJ Defourneaux was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2019.