

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM J. DONOVAN
US Army, Retired (Deceased)
Medal of Honor Recipient

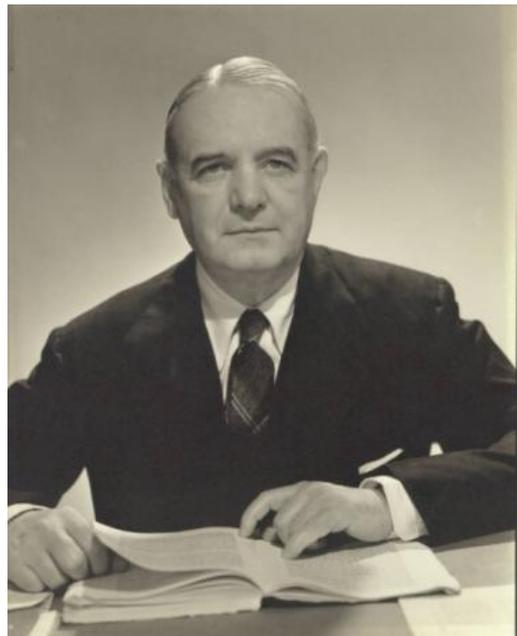


MG William Donovan, a New York native, earned a law degree at Columbia. He joined the First Cavalry Regiment (New York National Guard) and was stationed in Texas during the 1916 Punitive Expedition. He was transferred to the 165th Infantry Regiment, 42nd Division and sent to France in 1917. He received a Medal of Honor for his actions in WWI. According to the award citation, on 14-15 October 1918, at the Meuse-Argonne, LTC Donovan

personally led the assaulting wave in an attack upon a very strongly organized position, and when [US] troops were suffering heavy casualties he encouraged all near him by his example, moving among his men in exposed positions, reorganizing decimated platoons, and accompanying them forward in attacks. When he was wounded in the leg by machine-gun bullets, he refused to be evacuated and continued with his unit until it withdrew to a less exposed position.

Donovan was promoted to full Colonel before his discharge. He returned to his law practice and also had a variety of official and government assignments.

When World War II began, Donovan sent a proposal to President Franklin Roosevelt calling for the establishment of a strategic US intelligence-gathering service. In response, Roosevelt created the Coordinator of Information (COI) with Donovan as its chief. The COI was tasked with coordinating the efforts of the nation's various civilian and military intelligence organizations. Within a year, the COI had become the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)



under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The now military-controlled OSS was still led by Donovan, who was recommissioned as a Brigadier General.



Allied leaders meet in Burma to confer on future plans for the war in the Pacific, 1945. Left to right: GEN Daniel I. Sultan, Commander, US Forces, India-Burma Theater; MG Albert C. Wedemeyer, Commander, US Forces, China Theater; ADMI Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia; and MG William Donovan, Chief of the OSS.

At its peak, the OSS employed 13,000 men and women, both military and civilian. Approximately, 65 percent were US Army and Army Air Forces personnel. Going beyond the mere collection of information and the development of intelligence for strategic planners in the US, the OSS operated behind enemy lines in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The organization carried out sabotage, psychological warfare, paramilitary operations, and other covert actions during the war. The OSS was terminated in September 1945.

After the war, Donovan retired with the rank of Major General, but he campaigned strenuously for the establishment of a centralized OSS-like agency to handle intelligence for the President. Eventually, the OSS evolved into the Central Intelligence Agency.

MG Donovan's awards include the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Distinguished Service Cross, National Security Medal, and the Purple Heart (2 Oak Leaf Clusters).

MG Donovan passed away in February 1959. He was posthumously inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1988.