

## LIEUTENANT GENERAL SAMUEL V. WILSON US Army, Retired



LTG Wilson was both a leader of Army Intelligence and a pioneer in Special Operations during his 37-year military career. He joined the Army as a 16-year-old Private in 1940 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1942, after serving as a Squad Leader, Platoon Sergeant, and Acting First Sergeant of a Rifle Company.

Wilson taught guerilla and counter-guerilla tactics at the Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1942. The following year, at the age of 19, 1LT Wilson became the Chief Reconnaissance Officer of the 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as Merrill's Marauders, which operated behind enemy lines in Burma. Wilson received the Silver Star for his actions during the Burma Campaign.

After World War II, Wilson was assigned to the Office of Strategic Services in Southeast Asia, where he learned and developed intelligence gathering methods and reconnaissance techniques. He returned to the United States in 1945 and entered the Army's Foreign Area Specialist training program at Columbia University. Despite not having a high school diploma, he specialized in Russia and the Soviet partisan movement and developed native-speaker fluency in the Russian language.

LTG Wilson completed a two-year tour as an Intelligence Officer on the Army Staff, separate tours with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Operations Coordinating Board (White House), as a consultant on Soviet Affairs, and a three-year tour with the Central Intelligence Agency. From 1959 to 1961 he was the Director of Instruction at the Special Warfare School where he developed the Army's pioneer course in counterinsurgency warfare. In 1961 he was assigned to OSD as the Secretary's Deputy Assistant for Special Operations. Three years later, he served as the Associate Director for Field Operations with the US Agency for International Development, Vietnam. In 1966 he became the US Mission Coordinator, Vietnam, and Minister-Counselor of the American Embassy by presidential appointment.

From 1967 until 1970, Wilson served at the US Army John F. Kennedy Center and Institute for Military Assistance at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Promoted to Brigadier General in 1970, he was assigned as Assistant Division Commander, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. The following year he became the US Defense Attaché to the Soviet Union

and was posted to the US Embassy in Moscow. Upon his return to the United States two years later, Wilson was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) as first the Deputy Director for Estimates, and subsequently as Deputy Director for Attaché Affairs.

In 1974, LTG Wilson became the Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for the Intelligence Community. In 1976, he returned to the Department of Defense as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Intelligence), Resources and Management. His final assignment was as Director, DIA.

LTG Wilson retired from the Army on 31 August 1977. His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Army Distinguished Service Medal (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal, Silver Star (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Legion of Merit (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star for Valor (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal (2 Oak Leaf Clusters), Purple Heart, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Vietnamese National Administration Medal for Exemplary Service.

LTG Wilson was one of the original Distinguished Members of the MI Corps when the Corps activated in 1987, which automatically inducted him into the MI Hall of Fame. He was also inducted into the US Army Ranger Hall of Fame in 1993.

*"Ninety percent of intelligence comes from open sources. The other ten percent, the clandestine work, is just the more dramatic. The real intelligence hero is Sherlock Holmes, not James Bond."\**

**Lieutenant General Sam Wilson, USA Ret., former Director, DIA**

\*Reported by David Reed, "Aspiring to Spying," The Washington Times, 14 November 1997, Regional News, p. 1.



**A painting of LTG (Ret) Samuel V. Wilson at Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, where he was the president from 1992-2000.**