

The National Cryptologic Museum Foundation, Inc.

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1 October 2004

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TO: Members of the National Cryptologic Museum Foundation

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Subject: National Cryptologic Hall of Honor

SECRETARY

This is a request for your nominations to the National Cryptologic Hall of Honor.

TREASURER

Ms. Geraldine G. Garrett

The Cryptologic Hall of Honor was established in 1998 to recognize those outstanding individuals who have made singular and exceptional personal contributions to U.S. Cryptologic efforts and related fields. Nominees may be civilians or military who served at NSA, the SCEs or other government or private organizations involved in cryptologic endeavors. They shall have retired or departed from the activity for 15 years or more.

Mr. William T. Kvetkas, Jr.
TREASURER Emeritus

GENERAL COUNSEL

Leonard E. Moodispaw, Esq.

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Foundation members wishing to submit nominations should address them to the Recognition Committee, National Cryptologic Museum Foundation, P.O. Box 1682, Fort George G. Meade, Md. 20755-9998 or to the Foundation via email at cryptmf@aol.com, no later than 30 December 2004.

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Nominations should be unclassified and should state specific reasons why the nominees should be recognized. A maximum of two individuals may be nominated by each Foundation member. Please be as selective and discriminating as possible so that we maintain the highest level of quality the Hall of Honor deserves. The personal contribution of the nominee is as important as the posts they have held.

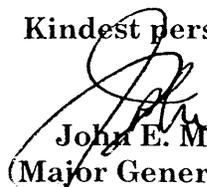
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The names of those already selected to the Hall of Honor are on the reverse side of this letter.

We'll be looking forward to hearing from you.

Kindest personal regards,


John E. Morrison, Jr.
(Major General, USAF (Ret))

President and Chairman of the Board

P.O. Box 1682, Ft. George G. Meade, MD 20755-1682 - Phone (301) 688-5436/37 - Fax (301) 688-5619

Encl:

<http://www.nationalcryptologicmuseumfoundation.com>

A/s

email: cryptmf@aol.com

Received 167
F.O. Box 1682
20755-1682

NOMINEE: Robert N. Tharp [1913-1993]

AREAS OF CONTRIBUTION: Instructor, Innovator, Motivator, Mentor

Robert N. Tharp was born in Northeast China of British missionary parents in 1913 and grew up bilingual in English and Mandarin Chinese. He had hoped to follow his parents as missionaries in China; however, the Second World War and the Chinese Communists' takeover of China intervened. Mr. Tharp and his wife were interned by the Japanese in December 1941. In late 1942 they were freed and transported to India where Mr. Tharp worked for the Indian government in a liaison role between Indian authorities and Chinese civilian and military personnel. Subsequently he worked for British intelligence and the British Ministry of Information. In 1947 Mr. and Mrs. Tharp were able to return to Northeast China briefly where they attempted to restart their missionary work; however, they were forced to flee by the Chinese Communist Forces.

In 1947 Mr. and Mrs. Tharp arrived stateless in the United States. On the verge of deportation Mr. Tharp interviewed with the chairman of the Chinese language department at the Army Language School [ALS] in Monterey, CA. Mr. Tharp was hired by the ALS and taught there until 1951. The ALS Chinese program was an all inclusive, not suited to the requirements of the individual services. Mr. Tharp joined the effort to update and upgrade the Chinese language study materials and overcome the near total lack of service specific content. At the ALS Mr. Tharp gained his first experience in bringing a less-than-effective language training program up to an acceptable level. We do not have the number of students who benefitted from Mr. Tharp's talents at the ALS; however, the number is very high. In 1951 the AF withdrew its students, 60% of the student body, to establish its own language programs at major universities, Yale among them. Mr. Tharp accepted a position in the Chinese program at Yale and changed military language training history forever.

Previously the AF selected airmen for language training at the ALS. The process was far from perfect and, as a result, attrition was very high. This was costly and failed to produce the needed numbers and quality. The Yale program devised by Mr. Tharp involved actually exposing a relatively large number of airmen [200+] identified by the AF to the Chinese language at the AF basic training site and only selecting those whose language aptitude showed the potential for actually performing well at Yale. In this "language aptitude screening" Mr. Tharp was supported by airmen who were presently in the program in New Haven. This served two purposes. It showed the candidates that people just like them could make it to the program and succeed. The process was simple and intense. After a description [in English] of the program the majority of the lesson presentations were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. There were explanations and demonstrations of the language's tonal system, simple vocabularies, the romanization and drills in pronunciation all followed by simple comprehension tests. Periodically the airmen would be given a short test in the vocabulary, correct tonal representation and simple sentence translation based on previously drilled "pattern sentences." Airmen with the lowest scores would be excused until the final class selection was made. Mr. Tharp and his team made 4 screening trips a year which resulted in the graduation of 3 classes a year.

It is significant that during the initial stages of this language aptitude screening process a number of recognized experts in the field appeared. Each sought to either refute Mr. Tharp's procedures altogether or to contend previously employed language aptitude tests, such as the use of artificial languages, were the most reliable indicators of success. In all cases when the results of each were compared with Mr. Tharp's results, Mr. Tharp's results, in terms of demonstrated language performance and very low rate of student attrition, were clearly superior.

It was at the end of the following 32 weeks, during which the airmen would experience what, under normal university schedules would require 3 years, that the Yale intensive/total language immersion training paid off. [Bear in mind that when in the training areas no English was spoken.] To keep pace, airmen spent 6 hours a day 5 days a week in classes and approximately 4 hours a night in study from texts, handouts or specifically prepared audio materials. The first two segments, 12 weeks each, were to form a comprehensive language base and were presented via Mr. Tharp's modifications to two basic Chinese texts, *Speak Chinese* and *Chinese Dialogues*. Mr. Tharp inspired confidence and trust in all the airmen, motivating them to succeed. He provided personal advice and support on call in the class environment, after class or at home.

Key to comprehension is effective listening. Mr. Tharp continued to innovate ways to give the airmen more and more time, in an out of class, to listen to recordings supporting segments 1 and 2 and particularly segment 3, *the military mission segment*. The AF provided field recorded examples for Bob to use; however, for "security" reasons the AF sanitized all the English and Chinese from the recordings. Bob overcame this by recording ambient noise and static from commercial radio. Using a jerry-rigged throat mike Mr. Tharp over-recorded all the simulated air situations which he and his staff could imagine: aircraft sightings [numbers, altitudes, range, headings], air battle, landings, numbers, place-names plus the use of dictionaries and maps. Initially the audio "lab" was meager. Over a short period Mr. Tharp designed and oversaw the lab's expansion to the point where each airman had his own listening booth. [Mr. Tharp patented the booth, #190,081, in 1961. Mr. Tharp's Chinese language program at Yale pioneered that concept which is now familiar in all language programs.] What the airmen heard at Yale was close in all respects to what they would hear in the field, a hurried whisper or scream in the middle of a hurricane. They performed exceptionally, exceeding both the AF's and Mr. Tharp's expectations. At a critical period of the Cold War they faced a daunting challenge and prevailed. Mr. Tharp's contributions were recognized by the DIRNSA and Commandant, NCS in February 1992 with the presentation of a plaque bearing the inscription:

"On behalf of the National Security Agency and the many, many students you taught so well and influenced so deeply during your long years of dedicated and truly outstanding service, we extend sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for unheralded, though widely acknowledged, contributions to the United States of America which inspired several generations of our best and brightest professionals." {Photo TAB B}

Before the university terminated the program it produced over 3100 airman/linguists with an attrition rate of approximately 10%, not all attributable to academic performance. After their service many joined NSA to continue to contribute, many rising to positions of note, including becoming members of the SCES. Many joined other government agencies [CIA, DIA, HUD, State, USAID, NORAD], others to contribute their AF-gained experience to defense contractors, commercial endeavors and to academia. One became U.S. Ambassador to the PRC and Korea. [List TAB C]

Mr. Tharp's background, talents, imagination and dedication to the U.S. intelligence missions drove him to throw all his energy into training AF linguists at Yale for 15 years. Many of Mr. Tharp's students remain among us, protecting our security and contributing to the intelligence missions of the country at NSA and elsewhere.

On behalf of the thousands of students who participated in Mr. Tharp's program.

Respectfully,


James E. Pauley