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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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17 May 1945

MEMORANDUM TO: The Adjutant General, War Department,
Washington, D. C.

THROUGH: The Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Stephenson, Sir William Samuel - Recommendation
for Award of Medal for Merit

1. It is recommended that Sir William Samuel Stephenson, Director of British Security Coordination, New York and Washington, be awarded the Medal for Merit.

2. While this organization has always insisted upon the right of the United States to maintain its own independent intelligence service and its own independent facilities for carrying out special operations, it seems only just that we should recognize our indebtedness to certain of our British colleagues who by their assistance in the early days when we lacked experience made possible the development of these services as they exist today. Foremost among these British colleagues was Sir William Samuel Stephenson, and it was largely through his efforts that the extensive experience of the British Government in the fields of secret intelligence and special operations was made available to this country. Without his help it would not have been possible to establish instrumentalities for these purposes in time to aid the American war effort. He not only enabled the United States to borrow on British experience, but he helped to secure and train the personnel initially required for this undertaking. At every step in the creation of these instrumentalities he contributed assistance and counsel of such value that his services may be considered exceptionally meritorious both to the Government of the United States and to the entire Allied cause. Some of the many substantial contributions which he made are set forth in detail below.

(a) After the President had set up the Coordinator of Information on 11 July 1941, Sir William helped to plan the organization necessary to carry out the functions of the Coordinator. To set up the framework of COI headquarters and field establishments, he made available experienced British Officers for advisory purposes and arranged for members of the COI staff to receive training

in administrative and field work at British schools. Many hundreds of COI and OSS personnel completed these courses, both before and after the entry of the United States into the war.

(b) Sir William was responsible for the satisfactory cooperation between the COI (and later OSS) and the British Intelligence Service. He accompanied the Coordinator to London where he established the necessary contacts with the heads of the British Naval and Military Intelligence Services and other wartime agencies. In addition, he took the necessary steps to provide the Coordinator with a regular flow of secret information from sources available to his own organization, including highly confidential British censorship material not normally circulated outside British Government departments. Through access to this information it has been possible to brief American agents more effectively than would otherwise have been possible prior to their dispatch into enemy territory. In addition, this close relationship between the British and American organizations proved to be of great value when, in order to obtain military intelligence in support of SHAEF, teams including more than 100 British and American intelligence agents were dispatched into occupied France before and shortly after D-day.

(c) To the work of COI and OSS in the field of Special Operations Sir William made a contribution of inestimable value. In 1941 he laid the groundwork for a trip to England by a COI representative who, after undergoing extensive training in British schools, returned to the United States to establish a Special Operations Branch. This Branch, originally staffed by Americans trained at a Canadian School, has operated in close cooperation with its British equivalent. The full value of this collaboration was evidenced in the summer of 1944 when OSS and British SOE working through the medium of a Joint Headquarters (JFHQ) under SHAEF organized, supplied and directed the French resistance groups who made such a decisive contribution to Allied Forces during the invasion of France.

(d) Similarly, in the field of counter-espionage it was Sir William who enabled the Counter-Espionage Branch of OSS to begin its operations by drawing upon the experience, techniques and training facilities of an established British organization. As a result of his efforts the American

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Counter-espionage Service has been able to draw upon the vast name files accumulated by the British in London. Rapid and convenient access to this reservoir of information made it possible for American counter-espionage field teams to identify and cause the apprehension of many enemy agents who have attempted to operate behind the lines of the Allied armies in the liberated countries of Europe. Indeed, it is interesting to note in this connection that the American teams, perhaps by virtue of their position with the American armies in France, were considerably more successful than the British teams which were attached to the British armies for this work.

(e) Throughout the years 1940-45, the period covered by the foregoing, Sir William Samuel Stephenson, whose entire service to this government has been honorable, has cherished an ideal of close cooperation between the two nations and their respective agencies. In a duty of great responsibility, he has worked tirelessly and effectively to advance the common cause by furthering in every way possible the development of an American Government and its Armed Forces the same strategic services furnished to the British Government by British organizations of a similar nature.

3. This recommendation is based on my personal observation since the year 1940 and on the records of this office.

/s/ William J. Donovan
Director