

The National Security Medal

By Ronald E. Fischer, with contributions from Charles P. McDowell



The **National Security Medal** was a decoration of the United States of America officially established by President Harry S. Truman in Executive Order 10431 of January 19, 1953. The medal was awarded to any person, without regard to nationality, for distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution on or after July 26, 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security of the United States. ^[1]

Executive Order 10431--National Security Medal

Source: The provisions of Executive Order 10431 of Jan. 19, 1953, appear at 18 FR 437, 3 CFR, 1949-1953 Comp., p. 927, unless otherwise noted.

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is hereby established a medal to be known as the National Security Medal with accompanying ribbons and appurtenances. The medal and its appurtenances shall be of appropriate design, approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.

2. The National Security Medal may be awarded to any person, without regard to nationality, including members of the armed forces of the United States, for distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution on or after July 26, 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security.
3. The decoration established by this order shall be awarded by the President of the United States or, under regulations approved by him, by such person or persons as he may designate.
4. No more than one National Security Medal shall be awarded to any one person, but for subsequent services justifying an award, a suitable device may be awarded to be worn with the Medal.
5. Members of the armed forces of the United States who are awarded the decoration established by this order are authorized to wear the medal and the ribbon symbolic of the award, as may be authorized by uniform regulations approved by the Secretary of Defense.
6. The decoration established by this order may be awarded posthumously.

Editorial note: The accompanying document, which was approved by the President on Jan. 19, 1953, was published with Executive Order 10431.

Regulations Governing the Award of the National Security Medal

Pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Executive Order 10431, the following regulations are hereby issued to govern the award of the National Security Medal:

1. The National Security Medal may be awarded to any person without regard to nationality, including a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, who, on or after 26 July 1947, has made an outstanding contribution to the National intelligence effort. This contribution may consist of either exceptionally meritorious service performed in a position of high responsibility or of an act of valor requiring personal courage of a high degree and complete disregard of personal safety.
2. The National Security Medal with accompanying ribbon and appurtenances, shall be of appropriate design to be approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.
3. The National Security Medal shall be awarded only by the President or his designee for that purpose.
4. Recommendations may be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council by any individual having personal knowledge of the facts of the exceptionally meritorious conduct or act of valor of the candidate in the performance of outstanding services, either as an eyewitness or from the testimony of others who have personal knowledge or were eyewitnesses. Any recommendations shall be accompanied by complete documentation, including where necessary, certificates, affidavits or sworn transcripts of testimony. Each

recommendation for an award shall show the exact status, at the time of the rendition of the service on which the recommendation is based, with respect to citizenship, employment, and all other material factors, of the person who is being recommended for the National Security Medal. 5. Each recommendation shall contain a draft of an appropriate citation to accompany the award of the National Security Medal. (2)

The National Security Medal is authorized to both civilians and personnel of the United States military and is an authorized decoration for display on active duty uniforms of the United States armed forces. In such cases, the National Security Medal is worn after all U.S. military personal decorations and unit awards and before any military campaign/service awards and foreign decorations.

Additional decorations of the National Security Medal were to be represented by a bronze oak leaf cluster.

Upon establishment of the National Intelligence Awards Program by the United States Intelligence Community, this highest award was to have been replaced with the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, but as a Presidential level award it appears to be still being awarded.

The original batch of National Security Medals were individually numbered on the reverse. Awarded medals were also engraved with the recipient's name. Accompanying the award was a presidential award document, along with a separate presidentially signed citation. Some sample citations are found below. First we will look at an example of an award ceremony.



Photos of President Regan presenting the National Security Medal to "Kelly" Johnson, Lockheed Skunk Works plane designer.

Clarence Leonard "Kelly" Johnson (February 27, 1910 – December 21, 1990) was an American system engineer and aeronautical innovator. He earned renown for his contributions to many noteworthy aircraft designs, especially the Lockheed U-2 and SR-71 Blackbird spy planes, but also including the P-38 Lightning, P-80 Shooting Star, and F-104 Starfighter, among others.

As a member and first team leader of the Lockheed Skunk Works, Johnson worked for more than four decades and is said to have been an "organizing genius".^[1] He played a leading role in the design of over forty aircraft, including several honored with the prestigious Collier Trophy, acquiring a reputation as one of the most talented and prolific aircraft design engineers in the history of aviation. (7)

Now let us look at a World War II Service medal group awarded to **William F. Friedman**, Cryptological Pioneer, that is part of the George C. Marshall Foundation Collection (8)

William Frederick Friedman (September 24, 1891 – November 12, 1969) was a US Army cryptographer who ran the research division of the Army's Signals Intelligence Service (SIS) in the 1930s, and parts of its follow-on services into the 1950s. In 1940, subordinates of his led by Frank Rowlett broke Japan's PURPLE cipher, thus disclosing Japanese diplomatic secrets before America's entrance into World War II.



Medals include the Medal for Merit, the National Security Medal, and the War Department Exceptional Service Medal. War Department Ribbons (L to R) include the Army Service Forces 6 Months Civilian Service Ribbon, the Army Service Forces 10 Years Civilian Service Ribbon, the Army Service Forces 10 Years Exceptional Civilian Service Ribbon (notated by the wreath), and the Overseas European, North African Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon on the bottom.





Award Documents for the Medal of Merit, the National Security Medal, and the War Department Army Service Forces 10 Years Exceptional Civilian Service Ribbon, that was later replaced by the Medal





The first production contract for the National Security Medal called for them to be numbered on the reverse of the eagle before they were finished. Notice the piercing cut under the eagles tail feathers on the first contract while the later made ones were not cut out. Presented medals were initially hand engraved while later ones are probably machine engraved. The first contract used a slot broach, while later ones used a crimped pin. Medals were presented in a named case with a miniature medal, ribbon bar and lapel pin.



(8)

These are examples of the text for two of the medals CITATIONS:

The President of the United States awards the National Security Medal to Frank B. Rowlett

in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the National Security as set forth in this

CITATION:

As Special Assistant to the Director of the National Security Agency, and as a leading force for more than three decades in the Nation's cryptologic efforts, Mr. Rowlett has made a profound contribution to the security of the United States.

A pioneer in modern cryptology, he has advanced the frontiers of this crucial field by applying his remarkable inventive skill and creative energy to a wide range of the most complex technical and technological problems. By providing the spark of insight, the initiative, and the leadership for new approaches, new techniques, and new technology, he has rendered service of incalculable value to the national intelligence effort and to the Nation's security. (4)



Frank Rowlett.

Frank Byron Rowlett (May 2, 1908 - June 29, 1998) was an American cryptologist. He was hired by William Friedman as a "junior cryptanalyst" for the Signals Intelligence Service (SIS) on April Fool's Day, 1930.

During the 1930s, after a lengthy period of training, Rowlett and his colleagues compiled codes and ciphers for use by the U.S. Army and began solving a number of foreign, notably Japanese, systems. In the mid-1930s, they solved the first Japanese machine for encipherment of diplomatic communications, known to the Americans as RED. In 1939-40, Rowlett led the SIS effort that solved a more sophisticated Japanese diplomatic machine cipher, codenamed PURPLE by the U.S. Once, when asked what his greatest contribution to that effort had been, Rowlett said, "I was the one who believed it could be done."

Rowlett also played a crucial role in protecting American communications during World War II, making fundamental and innovative contributions to the design of the SIGABA cipher machine. Its security was an important factor in saving American lives in combat.

In 1943-1945 he was chief of the General Cryptanalytic Branch, and in 1945-1947 chief of the Intelligence Division. From 1949 to 1952, he was technical director in the Office of Operations of the Armed Forces Security Agency, predecessor to the National Security Agency.

Citation Accompanying National Security Medal Awarded Posthumously to
Desmond FitzGerald.
September 15, 1967

THE PRESIDENT of the United States posthumously awards the National Security Medal to DESMOND FITZGERALD of the Central Intelligence Agency

in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the national security as set forth in this

CITATION:

As an American of high dedication to the principles upon which our Nation was founded, Mr. FitzGerald on two occasions left the practice of law to offer his unusual talents to his Government. Enlisting as a private in the United States Army in the early days of World War II, Mr. FitzGerald served gallantly and with distinction in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater until his separation as a major after the close of hostilities.

He again volunteered his services to the Nation when, at the outbreak of war in Korea, he became a member of the Central Intelligence Agency. In the following sixteen years, Mr. FitzGerald's exceptional competence and stimulating leadership won the confidence of his associates and established a standard of excellence to guide and inspire others who will follow in the intelligence service of our country. In achieving the remarkable accomplishments that have been of major significance to the United States during periods of world crisis, Mr. FitzGerald gave unstintingly of himself and his energies, of his courage and his imagination. His unchallenged integrity matched only by his passion for anonymity set precedents difficult to follow but of high importance to our Government. Mr. FitzGerald's valuable contribution to the strength of our Nation's foreign intelligence effort upholds the finest traditions of the Federal service.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON (3)

Desmond FitzGerald (June 16, 1910 – July 23, 1967) was Central Intelligence Agency deputy director. He served as a member of the Office of Strategic Services in the Far East in World War II. He participated in the campaign to retake Burma from the Japanese. He arranged for over 200 agents to be parachuted into China, 101 of which were killed or captured.

He was based in Taiwan during the Korean War, and then became CIA station chief in the Philippines and Japan. Eventually, he became head of the Far Eastern Division.

In 1962, during the John F. Kennedy administration, he became chief of the Cuban Task Force. In 1964 FitzGerald was CIA Western Hemisphere Division chief. (7)

An alphabetical list of known recipients with medal number if known, and year awarded:

- **William O. Baker (1982)** **Science, Technology, and Nat. Security Advisor**
- **Richard M. Bissell, Jr. (1962)** **Pioneer of Aerial Recon.**
- **David Blee (1983)** **Director of Counter Intelligence, CIA**
- **John O. Brennan (2006)** **Interim Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center**
- **George Bush (1977)** **Director CIA, 1976-1977**
- **Ann Z Caracristi (1982)** **Deputy Director of the National Security Agency**
- **James R. Clapper (2006)** **Director of National Intelligence**

- **William E Colby (1976)** **Director CIA, 1973-1976**
- **Leslie C Dirks (1978)** **Dep. Director CIA for Science and Technology**
- **Maj. Gen. William Joseph Donovan, USA (1957)** **Founded the OSS ^[2]**
- **Diana Lady Dougan (2006)** **Former US Ambassador**
- **Allen Dulles (1961)** **Director of CIA 1953-1961**
- **Robert F. Elsworth (1977)** **Congressman from Kansas, 1961-67**
- **Lt. Gen Lincoln D. Faurer USAF Ret. (1984)** **Director of NSA 1981-1985**
- **Desmond Fitzgerald (P) (1967)** **Deputy Director of CIA**
- **William F. Friedman (#6, 1955)** **Cryptography pioneer**
- **Robert Gates (1993)** **Director CIA 1991-93, Secretary of Defense, 2006-11**
- **John C. Gannon (1993)** **Staff Director, Select Committee on Homeland Security**
- **General Michael Hayden, (2009)** **Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence**
- **Richard Helms (1983)** **CIA Director, 1966-73**
- **John Edgar Hoover(1955)** **Director of the FBI, 1924-72**
- **Lawrence R. Houston (1973)** **General Council CIA 1947-1973**
- **Admiral Jonathon T. Howe (1993)** **National Security Advisor**
- **John T. Hughes (1984)** **DIA PI Collection Manager**
- **Admiral Bobby Ray Inman (1981)** **NSA Director, Deputy CIA Director**
- **Clarence Leonard "Kelly" Johnson (1983)** **Lockheed Skunk Works plane designer**
- **Steve Kappes (2009)** **Deputy Director CIA**
- **Lt Gen James C. King, USA (2001)** **NIMA Director (1998-2001)**
- **MG Edward G. Lansdale, USAF (1954)** **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Operations, DOD**
- **Edwin H. Land (1982)** **Photographic Scientist and Pioneer**
- **Lt. Gen. Bennett L. Lewis, USA Ret. (1984)**
- **Arthur C. Lundahl (1973)** **Father of Photographic Analysis**
- **John McCone (1965)** **CIA Director 1961-65**
- **John N McMahan (1984)** **Deputy Director of Central Intelligence**
- **LT Gen Kenneth A. Minihan, USAF (1999)** **Director NSA 1996- 1999**
- **Lt. Gen. William E. Odom, USA (1988)** **Director NSA 1985-1988**
- **Lt. Gen. Leonard H. Perrotts, USAF (1988)** **Director DIA 2985 - 1988**
- **Robert D. Murphy (1959)** **Assist. Sec. of State for International Organization Affairs March 20, 1953 – November 30, 1953**
- **John Parangoski (1976)** **National Reconnaissance Pioneer**

