

>>Hall of Honor



Charles C. Tevis

1920-1994

(2002 Inductee)

In his thirty-two years of cryptologic service, Charles Tevis was at the forefront of advanced Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) activities. He specialized in collection systems and was one of the principals involved in the establishment and organization of the SIGINT Missile and Astronautics Center (SMAC) and its successor, the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Center (DEFSMAC). His belief in the potential importance of electronic intelligence (ELINT) led to the full development of ELINT collection and processing techniques.

Mr. Tevis was born in 1920. After graduating from the College of Wooster, Mr. Tevis served in the United States Army, and he was selected for the Army's experimental program to teach students to read Japanese in thirteen weeks. After successfully completing the program, he joined the Signals Intelligence Service and was stationed at Arlington Hall Station, where he analyzed Japanese military communications.

Mr. Tevis remained in the SIGINT field following World War II. His early work included analysis of foreign technical communications. He was one of several analysts who collaborated in establishing a new reporting mechanism to provide warning of special events of high interest, which later became the basis for the establishment of SMAC. Mr. Tevis also displayed a high degree of linguistic and traffic analytic innovation in exploiting Russian entities previously considered worthless. In 1957, Mr. Tevis was awarded a fellowship to the Harvard Business School.

After helping to develop the SMAC, Mr. Tevis became a member of a select Department of Defense committee that studied the intelligence community's efforts against technical collection problems. The committee's recommendations led to the establishment of the DEFSMAC, and Mr. Tevis was appointed its first director by the secretary of defense in 1964.

After his success with DEFSMAC, Mr. Tevis originated the concept of a specialized collection management center, which was considered years ahead of its time. His concept later came to fruition as the Special Systems Support Center (SSSC). Mr. Tevis also served as chief of the Director's Advisory Group for ELINT and Reconnaissance (DAGER), and later as a group chief in the SIGINT Organization.

He was a member of the NSA Scientific Advisory Board (NSASAB) for eighteen years, serving on the ELINT Strategy Panel. It was largely due to his contributions and influence that the intelligence community produced detailed information about foreign high-tech weapons, which enabled the United States to devise means to counter them.

During his long career, Mr. Tevis was awarded the United States Intelligence Medal of Achievement and the NSA Exceptional Civilian Service Award. Mr. Tevis was admired and respected by all that knew him and was a mentor to many, according to former Deputy Director NSA, William Crowell. Former Secretary of Defense Dr. William Perry said of Mr. Tevis, "His brilliant mind, his insatiable curiosity and his unflagging energy led to many of the greatest intelligence achievements of [Cold War intelligence]." A relocated, modernized DEFSMAC, The Charles C. Tevis Operations Center, was dedicated in Mr. Tevis's memory in a 1998 ceremony.

After his retirement, Mr. Tevis continued to support SIGINT operations as a consultant with Ford Aerospace and TRW. Mr. Tevis passed away on 12 September 1994.