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CIA Honors its Fallen in Annual Memorial Ceremony

LANGLEY, VA -- On Monday, the Central Intelligence Agency paid tribute to the women and men of the Agency who have died in the line of duty—courageous Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Four additional stars were added to the Memorial Wall this year. CIA dedicated the Memorial Wall with 31 stars in 1974 to honor those who had fallen since the Agency's founding in 1947. There are now 117 stars on the wall.

In a ceremony in the lobby of CIA headquarters, Director John O. Brennan stood before the Memorial Wall and welcomed the families and friends of our fallen officers. "For anyone who wants to understand the essence of the CIA, one need look no further than this hallowed wall," he said. "These stars, and the memories they hold, will forever inspire and sustain us as we carry on the work to which those whose stars find lasting peace in this finely chiseled constellation devoted their lives."

The DCIA honored the memory of the four officers added to the Wall:

- James "Pete" McCarthy, Jr., a paramilitary operations officer who died on a training flight in Southeast Asia in 1954. Pete was born in 1925 in Medford, Massachusetts. Prior to joining CIA, he saw combat as a tail gunner in the Army Air Forces, flying 19 missions overall throughout Asia. Pete began his career at CIA in 1951 as a stenographer but later transitioned and thrived as an air operations specialist. The Director described Pete as a man of many interests who was intensely patriotic, passionate about sports, and deeply committed to his work.
- Charles Mayer, an engineer in the Directorate of Science & Technology who died in an airplane crash in Iran in 1968. Charlie was born in 1936 in Troy, Illinois. The son of a traveling magician, Charlie saw a great deal of America as a boy. He earned his undergraduate degree from Illinois State University and a master's degree in electrical engineering from Ohio State. After serving in the Navy, Charlie wanted to continue serving his country, so he offered his services to CIA. Charlie made valuable contributions to our efforts to monitor Soviet missile capabilities.
- Marcell Rene Gough, a maritime specialist who died in Africa in support of operations in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1965. Born in Meridian, Mississippi in 1924, Rene graduated from Meridian High School in 1942 and joined the Navy later that year. After serving with distinction for more than 20 years, Rene brought his naval expertise to CIA, where he set the bar high in his work maintaining crucial equipment as part of our operations aimed at helping the government defeat Communist-backed rebels. Rene tragically lost his life just 47 days into his tenure at CIA due to a vehicle accident.
- Ksawery "Bill" Wyrozemski, an air operations officer who died in a vehicle accident in Africa in support of operations in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1967. Bill was born in Poland amid the chaos of the First World War. During the Second World War, Bill joined a Royal Air Force fighter squadron staffed by Polish pilots, and he flew Spitfires and P-51 Mustangs right up through the Allies' victory in 1945. With the advent of the Cold War, Bill brought his talent and expertise in aerial warfare to CIA. Former CIA Director Richard Helms said Bill "was a man who, better than most, knew the meaning of freedom."

CIA's Memorial Ceremony is attended each spring by hundreds of employees, retirees, and family members of those who died in service with CIA.

Posted: May 24, 2016 03:10 PM

Last Updated: May 24, 2016 03:10 PM

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