

Colby Meets Old Buddies Of OSS Days

Oct 10/12/47
MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 11 (AP)—Lawyers, ship captains, business executives, a die maker, a pig farmer and the United States' spy chief were there among the old wartime buddies.

The 47 on hand were among 80 American soldiers who volunteered for special duty in Norway during World War II. All but one were of Norwegian ancestry and all were experts in parachuting, skiing and guerrilla warfare.

For the one non-Norwegian, William E. Colby, 55, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, coming to Minneapolis on Friday for the reunion was a sentimental journey. Thirty years ago, then Maj. Colby commanded the volunteers on their dangerous mission. Colby and the others parachuted into Norway to cut railroad lines Germans were using to bring troops back from Finland. Seventeen of the volunteers were killed.

The reunion in a Minneapolis hotel was the first ever held by the men from the secret organization known as NORSO, the Norwegian Special Operations Group, a branch of the Office of Strategic Services. They came from New York, California, Pennsylvania, the Panama Canal Zone and elsewhere. They told tall tales, sang bawdy songs and hugged each other.

The slightly built Colby, who was known to the others as "Major Guts and Bones," entered the reunion room carrying the NORSO flag, a pennant with a parachute and crossed rifles with a ski pole holding it up.

Later, the men who 30 years ago parachuted into Norway with "Major Guts and Bones" gave him a standing ovation.

"These Norwegians are great," said Colby, of Irish descent.