

FREEDOM FOUNDATION HONORS OFFICIAL WHO FOILED CZECH REDS

VALLEY FORGE, Pa., Feb. 21 (AP) — A 35-year-old State Department official who placed himself and his family "in imminent danger through four years" of anti-Communist spy work was named winner tonight of the Freedom Foundation's highest award.

Frank J. Mrkva, chief of the field service branch of the United States Passport Office, was cited for thwarting efforts by Czechoslovak agents to plant listening devices in buildings used by American diplomats.

Mr. Mrkva, born in Beaver Falls, Pa., of Czechoslovak immigrants, was among nearly 1,400 organizations, schools and individuals honored by the nonprofit, nonpolitical foundation in its 19th annual competition to spur "a better understanding of the American way of life."

Sixty of the top winners gather tomorrow on the 236th birthday of George Washington to receive their awards. Other presentations will be held later in the spring throughout the country.

Awards were made for sermons, public addresses, newspaper editorials, motion pictures, still photographs, cartoons, local and national advertisements, corporate and nonprofit publications, radio and television programs, college, community and education programs.

Winners in a category called "General Americana" included the Boy Scouts of America, the American Heritage Publishing Company of New York City, Kiwanis International, the National Exchange Club, Civitan International, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Certoma International.

Mr. Mrkva was hailed for exposing Czech attempts to get American diplomatic secrets between November, 1961, and July, 1966. During that period, said that foundation, he "placed himself and his family in imminent danger" while acting as a double agent.

A foundation spokesman said Mr. Mrkva was approached by two members of the Czech Embassy in Washington, who were later expelled from the country, and fed them unclassified papers from time to time — materials such as a State Department telephone book, press releases and administrative reports that had been cleared for transmittal.

In May, 1965, Mr. Mrkva was asked by one Czech agent to plant a listening device and the object was supplied. Following a series of clandestine meetings, Mr. Mrkva was given a listening device that could be activated and deactivated by remote control. It was to have been placed in an office bookcase.

The plot was made public after one agent complained that no signals were being received.

Mr. Mrkva, a resident of Lanham, Md., will receive \$5,000. Previous winners of the George Washington award include Senator John J. McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas; J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; President Herbert Hoover, and Col. John H. Glenn, America's first astronaut.

Top awards, also for things written, said or done during 1967, went to a former Secretary of State, a Hollywood actress, the commander of the Army band, a Florida sheriff and the physician-founder of the hospital ship S.S. Hope.

The foundation distributes about \$100,000 in cash, medals, libraries and teacher-pupil visits to this area where Washington's men spent the winter of 1777-78.

James F. Byrnes, now 88 years old and in retirement in Columbia, S.C., was cited for "his distinguished career as

lawyer, Congressman, Governor, Senator, Supreme Court Justice and Secretary of State" — the last in 1945-47 under President Harry S. Truman.

Special Awards Made

Martha Raye, tabbed "Colonel Maggie" by Vietnam servicemen, won the National Service Medal "for her lighthearted entertainment giving cheer to lonely patriots far from home." Bob Hope, movie and television comedian, was the only previous recipient.

Special Freedom Leadership Medals were awarded to Dr. William B. Walsh of Washington, president of Project Hope, which sponsors the worldwide voyages of the hospital ship; Dr. Kenneth McFarland of Topeka, Kan., "for his multitude of inspired patriotic speeches,"

and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Knott of Buena Park, Calif., for constructing a model of Independence Hall at their farm "where educational programs on the fundamental principles undergirding our republic are presented."

The 34-member awards jury headed by two college presidents—Dr. Lawrence F. Small of Rocky Mountain and Dr. Daniel L. Marsh of Boston University — also chose five persons for National Recognition Awards. They are:

Ernest Crain, member of the political science faculty at Santa Ana (Calif.) College; Sheriff Donald S. Genung of Pinellas County, Clearwater, Fla.; Lieut. Col. Samuel R. Loboda of Washington, composer and commanding officer of the Army band, and Mr.

and Mrs. Ken Magner of Greenwich, Conn.

Other Winners Listed

Other winners:

Sermons—the Rev. John F. Sammon of the St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church, Tustin, Calif.; public addresses—Carl R. Terzian, Los Angeles; campus programs—Pierce College, Woodland Hills, Calif., and Xavier University, Cincinnati; community—Canton (Ohio) Kiwanis Club; editorial cartoon—Louis Goodwin, Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch; editorial—Jim Wright, Dallas Morning News. Governmental unit—Office of the Chaplain, Air Force; the 1350th Motion Picture Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and the Arizona Department of Public Instruction; letter from serviceman—Specialist 4 Mark A. White of Creston, Iowa, now stationed in Germany where he wrote on "Freedom—My Heritage, My Responsibility;" General Americana—Ed Mason of Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, advertising—Hammermill Paper Company, Erie, Pa., and Guardian Moving and Storage Company, Pensacola, Fla.; publications—Potomac Edison Company, Hagerstown, Md., and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Radio—KDKA radio, Pittsburgh; television—American Broadcasting Company, New York, and Charles Cahill & Associates, Inc., Hollywood; economic education—Junior Achievement, Inc., New York; and Union Electric Company, St. Louis; letter to editor—Mary Jo Payne, Tulsa, Okla.