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WW II British Woman Photo Interpreter Forever Remembered at NGA

Today's imagery analysts can trace their historical roots back to World War II and the contributions of British photo interpreter Flight Officer Constance Babington Smith MBE and others like her. At the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) Washington, D.C., Navy Yard facility, NGA honored Babington Smith by naming the facility's Analysis Fusion Cell after her.

Babington Smith was a woman celebrated for her visionary spirit and innovation in the field of aircraft and photographic interpretation and analysis. During the ceremony, NGA Director retired Air Force Lt. Gen. James R. Clapper Jr. said, "Her work has ensured that this tradecraft will always be an integral part of strategic military planning. Her historic discoveries during World War II helped strengthen partnerships between the Allies and helped open doors for women interested in careers in imagery analysis."

Air Commodore Martin R. Hallam, Royal Air Force, Chief Executive Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency told the audience attending the Oct. 7 ceremony that Constance Babington Smith was, "a bright star in what was a galaxy of exceptional people, drawn from both sides of the Atlantic in a common cause."

Babington Smith was a pioneer in the craft of aircraft and photographic interpretation, greatly expanding the usefulness of analytic interpretation. One of Babington Smith's most celebrated discoveries during World War II was her identification of an unidentified, pilotless aircraft at Peenemunde, a major

German army rocket research center on the Baltic coast. Her discovery led to the air campaigns that disrupted German plans for the mass launch of V1 and V2 rockets against the Allies. In the summer of 1945, after Germany surrendered, she came to the United States and assisted in the war against Japan.



The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), Washington, D.C., Navy Yard facility, honored Flight Officer Constance Babington Smith MBE by naming the facility's Analysis Fusion Cell after her. Standing in front of a World War II photo of Constance Babington Smith is: (left to right) Air Commodore Martin R. Hallam RAF, Chief Executive, Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency; Mr. James Babington Smith, nephew; and Lieutenant General James R. Clapper, Jr., USAF (Ret.), Director, NGA.

After the end of World War II, Babington Smith never lost her interest or enthusiasm for imagery intelligence. She worked as a researcher for Life magazine and also wrote Evidence in Camera, originally published as Air Spy: The Story of Photo Intelligence in World War II.

Constance Babington Smith died July 31, 2000 at 87.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Clapper presented James Babington Smith MBE, Babington Smith's nephew, a plaque to commemorate her enduring contributions to aircraft and photographic interpretation.

NGA is both a national intelligence and DOD combat support agency whose mission is to provide timely, relevant and accurate geospatial intelligence in support of our national security. Geospatial intelligence is the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on the Earth. Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., NGA has major facilities in the Washington D.C., Northern Virginia and St. Louis, Mo. areas with NGA support teams worldwide.