

DSS Historical Fact of the Day – February 2016

February 2016

February 1, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Three years ago today, on February 1, 2013: A suicide bomber entered the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. When questioned by Mustafa Akarsu (pictured), who was a member of the DS-managed Local Guard Force, the attacker detonated a bomb concealed beneath his clothing, killing Akarsu and himself. The Turkish Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front claimed responsibility for the attack. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 2, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



In a photo taken 77 years ago, American volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade return from the Spanish Civil War in February 1939. Communists fighting in the war stole 2,000 passports from U.S. volunteers and shipped them to Moscow where they were reissued to intelligence operatives. As a result, State Department investigators with the Office of the Chief Special Agent, a predecessor organization of DSS, conducted exhaustive shipboard interviews with all Americans returning from Spain to verify they were U.S. citizens, not imposters. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 3, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



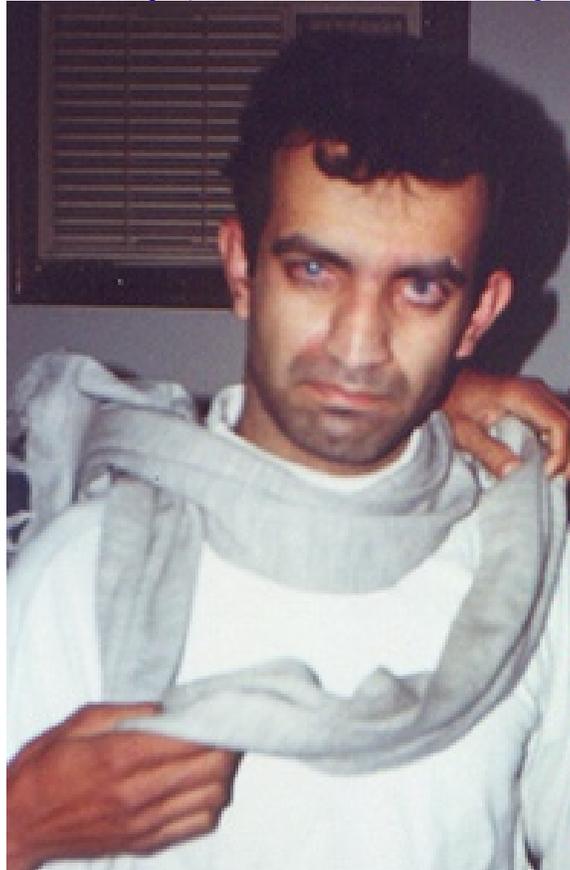
Six years ago today, on February 3, 2010, America's Most Wanted TV show host John Walsh interviewed DSS Special Agent Rob Kelty in San Pedro, Belize. Kelty, who at the time was the Regional Security Officer for U.S. Embassy Belmopan, was honored by the U.S. Marshals Service for his role in returning 19 fugitives to the United States in 2009. Between the time that the show was recorded and that it was aired in late February, Kelty assisted in the capture of another fugitive who had been hiding in the Central American country for a decade and who subsequently pleaded guilty in a U.S. court to murder. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 6, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Seven years ago, on February 6, 2009, a DSS special agent (left) serving as Regional Security Officer (RSO) confers with Kenyan Wildlife Service officials in Nairobi National Park. For decades RSOs in Nairobi have worked with the Wildlife Service to disrupt the sale of illegally poached elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns. Proceeds from poaching feed into money laundering, corruption, and terrorism, as well as negatively affecting international tourism, a major part of the nation's economy. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 7, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty-one years ago today, on February 7, 1995, terrorist Ramsay Yousef (pictured during his arrest) was apprehended in Islamabad by a team of Pakistani law enforcement officers accompanied by DSS special agents. In 1993, Yousef drove the explosives-filled rental van that blew up in the parking garage of the World Trade Center, killing six and injuring 1,000. An informant received a \$2 million reward under the Rewards for Justice program for revealing Yousef's location to U.S. diplomats in Pakistan. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 8, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Six years ago today, on February 8, 2010, Nicholas Leotti, a DSS private security contractor at the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Office in Baghdad, Iraq, died from injuries suffered in a helicopter training accident that occurred in Baghdad on July 17, 2009. Leotti previously served four years in the United States Marine Corps, attaining the rank of sergeant. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 9, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Thirty-one years ago, in February 1985, newly trained members of Basic Special Agent Class XXV pose for their class photo. This group, the first special agent class in several years, was known as the “First Inman Class.” With growing terrorism in the early 1980s, the State Department in 1984 asked retired Admiral Bobby Ray Inman to conduct a comprehensive review of diplomatic security. The Inman Report recommended a range of security improvements at overseas diplomatic facilities, including creating the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), and doubling the number of special agents. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 10, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Fifty-two years ago, in February 1964, senior KGB official Yuriy Ivanovich Nosenko defected to the United States and told officials about Soviet surveillance inside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, naming specific offices. Three State Department technical security officers, John Bagnal, Donovan Fischer, and Maclyn Musser, dismantled rooms for ten days before discovering an extensive network of 64 listening devices hidden behind radiators. A similar network was found in the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw. The discoveries were one of the reasons U.S. Navy Seabees were permanently assigned to the State Department beginning in 1965 to oversee construction in sensitive areas of embassies. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 11, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Ninety-four years ago, from December 1921 through February 1922, the United States convened the Washington Naval Conference, hailed as history's first disarmament conference. State Department special agents met diplomats upon arrival by ship in New York to assist them with U.S. customs, then arranged for their secure transportation within the United States. A detachment of 120 U.S. Marines assisted the State Department in providing security for the offices of the visiting delegations in Washington. Attending were envoys from Belgium, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 12, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty-seven years ago, in February 1989, DSS special agents (left and right) provide protection for Britain's Princess Diana (center), who was on a three-day visit to New York City. Here the agents keep a watchful eye as she greets well-wishers during her visit to an AIDS-treatment center at New York City's Harlem Hospital. DSS provides security for members of the British royal family during their visits to the United States, as well as other visiting foreign dignitaries who are not heads of state. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 13, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Thirty-seven years ago, in February 1979, the Iranian revolution turned violent, setting the stage for the hostage crisis later that year. On February 11, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had ruled since 1941, fled the country. On February 12, the Iranian military unit protecting the U.S. Embassy in Tehran withdrew to its barracks, leaving only the U.S. Marine Security Guard Detachment. On February 14, approximately 75 militants climbed over walls and stormed through Embassy buildings for several hours. Ambassador William Sullivan gathered staff inside the safe haven and ordered Marines to fire tear gas to slow the attackers until the Iranian interim government intervened. Marine Sergeant Kenneth Kraus was abducted, tortured, and sentenced to death in a 10-minute "trial," but Ambassador Sullivan and President Jimmy Carter secured his release after six days. The incident became known darkly as the Valentine's Day Open House. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 14, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Thirty-seven years ago today, on February 14, 1979, U.S. Ambassador Adolph "Spike" Dubs was murdered by terrorists in Kabul, Afghanistan. That morning, four Afghans stopped Ambassador Dubs' car. He was kidnapped and held at the Kabul Hotel, with Afghan police surrounding the scene accompanied by Soviet advisors. U.S. Embassy staff members were kept at a distance. Against U.S. recommendations, Afghan police stormed the room where Dubs was held. Following an intense gun battle, Dubs was discovered shot dead. He is one of eight U.S. ambassadors killed in the line of duty. For more DS history, click [here](#)

February 15, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



In 2013, the National Defense Authorization Act authorized 1,000 additional Marine Security Guards to buttress protection of people, facilities and information at diplomatic facilities. The 2013 increase approximately doubled the number of U.S. Marine Security Guards, so that today more than 2,000 U.S. Marines are protecting U.S. diplomatic facilities overseas. DSS special agents, as part of their security duties at U.S. Embassies, oversee the Marine Security Guards and other security assets. Seen here, a DSS special agent serving as an assistant regional security officer (right) at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad inspects a communication log with a Marine Security Guard (center), as another Marine (left) adjusts equipment inside Post 1, the facility's communications hub. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 16, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty-five years ago today, on February 16, 1991, two locally employed security staff in Cairo, Egypt, died in a fatal vehicle accident involving a U.S. Embassy motorcade. Ragab Awad Hassan and Mohamed Saad are among the 137 people honored on the DS Memorial Wall, which recognizes those who lost their lives in the line of duty while in service to Diplomatic Security. For more information about the DS fallen, see <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/memorial>. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 17, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty years ago, in February 1996, DSS special agents provided protection for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher (rear center) during a visit to the U.S.-led sector of the NATO Implementation Force in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO forces deployed to Bosnia two months earlier as part of the U.S.-brokered Dayton Accords, an agreement to end the 3½-year-long war between Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Serbs following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 18, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Six years ago today, on February 18, 2010, DSS special agents (seen here) helped protect U.S. athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. DSS is the primary federal law enforcement agency for protecting U.S. athletes and other U.S. citizens at each overseas Olympics, as well as other international sporting events. State Department special agents started providing security for American athletes overseas in the 1970s, but the efforts increased notably

in the 1990s. For the 1996 games in Atlanta, DSS provided dignitary protection and protection for the Israeli athletes. As a result of the domestic terrorist bombing in Atlanta, DSS established a permanent Olympics coordinator position. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 19, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Forty-three years ago, in February 1973, the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a U.S. embassy constitutes a “special maritime and territorial jurisdiction” under U.S. law and ruled that the power of Congress to prohibit “the killing of an American citizen by another American citizen within a diplomatic compound located in a foreign country is, we think, beyond question.” The decision upheld the voluntary manslaughter conviction of U.S. Chargé d’Affairs Alfred Erdos. The 1971 killing took place at the U.S. Embassy in violence-racked Santa Isabel (since renamed to Malabo), Equatorial Guinea. Erdos, who later pleaded temporary insanity, said he believed his assistant, Donald Leahy, was part of a communist plot. Erdos tied Leahy to a chair in the communications vault, radioed the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana, then murdered Leahy with a pair of scissors. The U.S. ambassador, resident in neighboring Cameroon, personally investigated, saying the presence of special agents to investigate the murder would have strained already-tense relations with Equatorial Guinea. The 4th Circuit Court ruling led the way for DSS to have legal authority for investigating crimes by Americans within U.S. embassies. Erdos was sentenced to 10 years in prison. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 20, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Five years ago today, on February 20, 2011, Iraqi law enforcement officer Mustafa Adnan Shalaka was killed in Balad, Iraq. He was shot and killed while providing protective support for a U.S. Embassy Baghdad motorcade. The DS Memorial recognizes those who lost their lives in the line of duty while in service to Diplomatic Security. For more information about the DS fallen, see <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/memorial>. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 21, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Eight years ago today, on February 21, 2008, approximately 100 protestors in Belgrade, Serbia, broke into the U.S. Embassy, setting a fire and causing extensive property damage. One 20-year-old Serbian protester was killed in the fire but no Americans were injured. The protests were in response to Kosovo's Western-backed declaration of independence from Serbia four days earlier. DS security personnel and U.S. Marine Corps Embassy Security Guards successfully protected

U.S. diplomats and thwarted efforts to inflict more severe damage on the compound. Embassies of Croatia and Germany also were overrun and set on fire. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 22, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Seventy-three years ago today, on February 22, 1943, James N. Wright, a U.S. Marine serving as a State Department diplomatic courier during World War II, was among 24 passengers and crew who died aboard a [Pan American Airlines Boeing 314 seaplane](#) that crashed while landing at Lisbon, Portugal. Wright's body was reportedly found with his diplomatic briefcase still handcuffed to his wrist. He became the first diplomatic courier to die in the line of duty and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Fifteen passengers and crew survived the crash-landing of the Pan Am "Yankee Clipper" (pictured here in a 1939 photograph), which was en route from the Azores. Pan Am's wartime trans-Atlantic service through neutral Portugal served as a vital diplomatic route. The "Clipper to America" from Lisbon also was referenced in the classic 1943 film "*Casablanca*," which premiered a month before the Lisbon accident. Today, Diplomatic Security's [Diplomatic Courier service](#) ensures the secure movement of classified and sensitive U.S. government material all over the world.

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For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 23, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty-three years ago, in February 1993, Michael E. Hannum, using the alias Michael E. Anderson, applied for a U.S. passport with a counterfeit birth certificate and Social Security card. Hannum was arrested by DSS special agents from the San Francisco Field Office. It was soon discovered that Hannum was a fugitive wanted for an armed robbery of approximately \$350,000 from an Omaha, Nebraska, race track. Hannum subsequently was found guilty of the robbery and sentenced to ten years for weapons charges. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 24, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Five years ago in Cairo, Egypt, DSS special agents protected U.S. Senators John McCain (pointing, center left) and Joseph Lieberman (center right) as they met with Egyptians in February 2011 in Tahrir Square, site of the “Arab Spring” uprising that toppled the government of longtime Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak. DSS special agents (standing beside Senator Lieberman, at right; extreme left rear with sunglasses; and extreme right rear, partially hidden) provided security for the two senators, who visited two weeks after Mubarak resigned. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 25, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



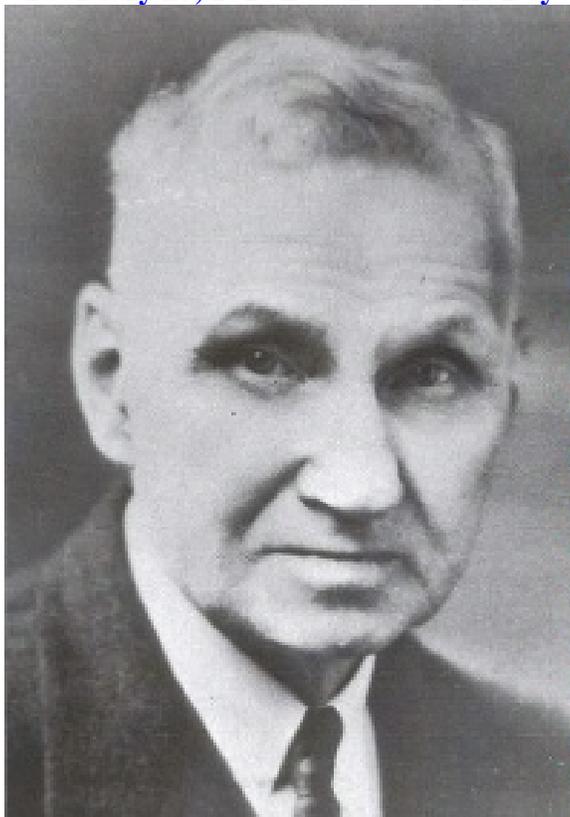
Twelve years ago, in February 2004, a DSS special agent guarded the entrance of a United Nations compound in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as foreigners prepared to be evacuated from the country amid an anti-government rebellion. Days later, on the nights of February 28-29, 2004, Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide went into exile, saying he wanted to avoid bloodshed as rebel forces approached the capital. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 26, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Twenty-three years ago today, on February 26, 1993, a bomb exploded in the parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. Police and the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force immediately called upon the DSS to support the investigation. In the photo, a DSS special agent operates an explosive detector inside a crater left by the blast. DSS helped to quickly identify terrorists responsible for the attack before they could leave the United States. However, Ramzi Yousef, a main planner of the attack, fled the United States. Two years later, acting on a tip from an informant in Islamabad, Pakistan, a team of Pakistani police officers and DSS special agents stormed Yousef's residence and arrested him. He is serving two life sentences in the United States. For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 27, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Seventy-six years ago today, February 27, 1940, Robert C. Bannerman, who had served as the Chief Special Agent for nearly 20 years, died of a heart attack. Bannerman was one of the first three State Department special agents recruited during World War I, and he became Chief Special Agent in 1920, holding the post until his death at age 66. Bannerman established many practices still in use today, including protective details, investigating passport fraud, and assisting U.S. immigration authorities. *The New York Times* called him the “mystery man” of the State Department, adding, “Throughout his career he kept himself and his work strictly anonymous.” An Associated Press obituary said details of Bannerman’s ongoing work in investigating German spy rings and passport fraud “cannot yet be told, because the kind of work he did must continue to be done by his successors. And in the State Department—which is jealous of its secrets—the Office of the Chief Special Agent is the most secret of all.” For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 28, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Thirteen years ago today, on February 28, 2003, a gunman opened fire on Pakistani police providing perimeter security for the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi, killing local law-enforcement officers Syed Ameer Badsha and Ghulam Murtaza. Six others were injured. In this photo, taken shortly after the attack, U.S. Consul General John K. Bauman (right) confers with Inspector General of Sindh Province, Kamal Shah (left).

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For more DS history, click [here](#).

February 29, 2016 DSS Fact of the Day



Ninety-nine years ago, in February 1917, former Secret Service Agent Joseph M. “Bill” Nye became the State Department’s first Chief Special Agent. Nye had served on the protection details of Presidents William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson, then was detailed to the State Department in 1916 as the United States faced security challenges relating to World War I. In early 1917, Congress granted the State Department legal authority to hire its own federal agents, and in February 1917 Secretary of State Robert Lansing appointed Nye as Special Assistant to

the Secretary. By the end of the month Nye also carried the title Chief Special Agent. His new duties included hiring additional special agents, mostly in New York City and recruited mainly from among postal inspectors. Nye also personally protected the German ambassador until he departed the United States in April following the U.S. declaration of war. Nye served until 1920 and was widely known for his role in protecting visiting royalty. For more DS history, click [here](#).