

CIA database's results for "Alton, Illinois" return historical surprise

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February 9 2017 1:11 PM



ALTON - Altonian **Fred Schlafly**, the husband of the late conservative activist **Phyllis Schlafly** and the **President of the World Anti-Communist League**, was mentioned in the newly searchable **Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** database.

The **CIA Records Search Tool (CREST)** has been available in a limited computer system at the **National Archives at College Park, Maryland**. People had to visit that site to search any available and declassified documents. Since January 2017, however, the CIA has allowed its CREST service to be available in a convenient and searchable database online. It can be found at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/crest-25-year-program-archive>.

Records searchable through CREST are available courtesy of **Executive Order 13526** (formerly Executive Order 12958 as amended). That order, signed by **President**

William Jefferson Clinton, requires the declassification of nonexempt historically valuable records 25 years or older. It was originally issued in April 1995 and required the documents be available by the year 2000.

When searching "Alton, Illinois," the first result is a memo to **Major General Vernon A. Walters** from **George W. Anderson, Jr.** dated Jan. 24, 1975.

Walters served as an officer in the United States Army and as a diplomat. He served as the Deputy Director for the CIA from 1972-1976 and was the United States Ambassador to the CIA from 1985-1989. He was also an ambassador to the **Federal Republic of Germany** from 1989-1991 during the historic **German Reunification**.

Anderson was also a diplomat and an admiral in the **United States Navy**. He served as **Chief of Naval Operations** from 1961-1963, most notably being in charge of the **United States Naval Blockade of Cuba** during the **Cuban Missile Crisis**.

In the memo, which was labeled confidential, Anderson laments the fact he was unable to convince Walters to "linger for a few minutes to meet and listen to the two gentlemen who had an appointment" with him. Those gentlemen were Gen. Tom Lane and Alton native Fred Schlafly.

Schlafly requested the meeting with Anderson to speak on behalf of a Brazilian organization known as **Sociedad Brasilare de Defensa de la Tradicion, Familia y Propiedad**, which roughly translates to Brazilian Society of Defense of the Tradition, Family and Property.

"Apparently this organization, under the leadership of a **Professor Plinio Correa de Oliveira**, has the capability and a motivation to do something to halt the spread of communism in Portugal," Anderson wrote in the memo. "I understand that this organization is prominent in Latin America, and puts out publications in different countries in Portuguese and Spanish each month, and also has some other publications as well."

That organization was inspired by Catholic traditionalism in 1960. It was guided by Catholic ideals and fought against Masons, Socialists and Communists. The group had more than 1,500 members when Oliveia died in 1995.

Anderson requested Walters, who was then Deputy Director of the CIA, to do something to assist this group.

"Obviously, I do not know what can be done or whether, under the present limitations which the agency faces at the present time, you are able to do anything directly,"

Anderson said. "I suspect any action to be taken by the TFP would probably request some funding from the U.S. In any event, it is something that should be looked into, and if you want further information, please contact Mr. Schlafly, whose address is First National Bank Building, P.O. Box 190, Alton, Illinois 62002."

That address was in a location, which is now the offices of Riverbender.com.

Other declassified documents from the CIA's archives include listing the **Alton National Cemetery** as being out of available plots.

The complete memo from Anderson to Walters can be found here: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80R01731R002200100027-2.pdf>