

Transcription of letter from SA Marvin Van Dera (Ret.) to SA J. Brian McKee (Ret.)

Apr 27-1988
Sun City, Arizona

Dear Brian:

Sorry for not responding sooner to your Mar 16th letter + the interesting enclosed publications. I had to wait 3 weeks for the pictures I am enclosing.

The plaque is 18" across and if you look closely you will see a Dolphin – Sherlock Holmes cap – spy glass – pipe.

This plaque was made in Chicago about 1941 by the W.P.A when Roosevelt was president. Only a few were made and I was fortunate to get one. It is made of plaster of paris. It hangs on the wall of our den and is a great conversation piece.

I recall the days when the 9ND DIO hired Joseph Brown and I to do investigations. We were paid a salary and expenses out of the DIOs C+CI Fund. Meaning Collection and Classification of Information fund. In 1937 my salary was 175⁰⁰ per month and expenses mostly – gasoline – was about 20⁰⁰. We furnished our own privately owned vehicle.

Our credentials consisted of a Standard 3x5 card on which was typed something to the effect that we were employed by the Navy and request cooperation by Federal State and local law enforcement in the performance of our duties. The card was signed by the 9ND DIO.

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At the time Wash DC had nothing to do with it. The DIO was at Great Lakes and we had our small desk in the rear of the Navy Hydrographics Office in the Federal Bldg in Chicago.

Frank KNOX was secretary of the Navy (1941) and when he came to Chicago (HOME) for brief periods, in addition to other duties I was assigned as his body guard. Most of our work consisted of daily surveillances of Japanese who were coming across country with stop over in Chicago area. We wanted to know who they contacted, what their interest was and other pertinent information. The old memories of these assignments are very cherished.

I will be 80 in September and probably one of the oldest former Special Agents with about 30 years of service. During my career I was in 4ND 9ND 11ND 12ND 13ND 14ND - BERLIN GERMANY and of course Wash. DC.

Please excuse my writing and I am sorry about rambling around with my above comments.

Thanks- Van

P.S. I have a 1st Navy Special Agent Badge issued about 1917. It has six points and says NAVY DEPARTMENT 9TH 10TH + 11TH Naval Districts AID FOR INFORMATION. You probably have one also.

Van