

OFFICE OF THE NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

- 01 (Office) - This is the Office of the Director, of the Naval Investigative Service. In the Navy's search for investigative professionalism, it took a great many years to fill this chair.
- 02 (Paper dated May 10, 1869) - The quest began in the decades that followed the Civil War. War clouds which had darkened the land were dissipating and attention focused on pulling together a divided country. It was a time of National activity and little notice was taken of a certain proposal drafted by a Navy Lieutenant in Washington.
- 03 (Candle) - Then it was simply referred to as the MASON MEMORANDUM. We now know it as the ONI Charter. Lieutenant Theodarus Mason saw that the Navy needed an intelligence arm for those who view intelligence as a product of the investigative process, the origins of our service trace from here. Lieutenant Mason wasted no
- 04 (General Order) - time in persuading the Navy Secretary to write this order, which created an Office of Intelligence. The mission was simple; "To collect information useful in times of war and peace". From the Bureau of Navigation,
- 05 (Mason) - he shepherded his small office for the next three years, having
- 06 (Handwritten Memorandum) - thoughtfully drafted a guidance directive for himself as the Chief. It was a modest beginning. His staff consisted only of a few officers and a borrowed clerk.
- 07 (Maine) - Sixteen years later the explosion of the Maine finally jolted Congress into appropriating funds for Naval Intelligence. The early part
- 08 (Development) - of the twentieth century saw little progress from an investigative standpoint. In 1913, when plans of the Battleship,

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Pennsylvania, were stolen the Navy turned, not to ONI but to
09 (Burns) - the Burns Detective Agency for assistance. The state of
readiness during these years was characterized by

10 (USMC Col. Russell) - Marine Colonel John Russell.

"During the summer of 1913, I reported for duty at ONI. I found
that most of the time was spent reading newspapers and filing the
results. I drew up a plan for reorganization and it met with dis
approval and, shortly thereafter, I was sent to Mexico".

Perhaps, it was prophetic that the triple alliance born in the same
year as ONI proved the catalyst that lifted investigations from the
dust bin of obscurity. Incidents of sabotage

11 (Building) - heightened as the United States drew closer to war with
the Central Powers. In July of 1916, a forty million dollar explosion
ripped apart a New Jersey city munitions dock. This was called the
Black Tom Incident, it was traced to German saboteurs.

12 (German Helmet) -

"About January, 1917, I was placed in charge of

13 (Section A) - Section A with Lieutenant Commander Edward McCally, we
were the first to place men undercover both in this country and on
foreign soil".

Russell and McCally made counter-intelligence investigation the
primary task of ONI. Undercover agents were seated in Mexico,
South America and the Caribbean well before the United States
entered the war. Aid for Information

14 (Aid Badge) - officers were assigned to Naval districts and made responsible
for investigations. They used reserve personnel, investigators
borrowed from other agencies and the first cadre of civilian Special

Agents. At the same time an undercover network was developed in the United States. The first

16 (Badge and Credentials) - was a small branch office in New York City in the Fall of 1916. Others followed in major seaports and manufacturing centers and the first female Special Agents were used in these

17 (Female) - operations. Despite their limited resources, these fore-bearers of our present service were remarkably effective considering, that in less than three years, eighteen German Spies were surfaced by them. The successes of these men and women, often volunteers and working without pay, were impressive. Unorthodox as they may have been, these earliest agents made a critical contribution to the Nation's security.

17A (Sailor and Flag) - From the outbreak of the war, ONI Headquarters in Washington ^{XA} expanded from eight to over three hundred reservists, directing investigative activity on a global basis. By war's end they were a professional organization; but the country was in no mood to apply lessons learned. This had been the war to end all wars and the push for normalcy was a monopoly for the Navy Secret Service. ^{AB}
Retrenchment was sudden and complete. Thrown away and forgotten was our accumulated investigative experience leaving only a handful of agents to carry on. The attitude of the time was

18 (ONI Paper) - expressed by the DNI before Congress in 1920.

"The greatest thing I have had to contend with has been to get ONI away from activity that has to do with enemy agents. I have assurance from the Secretary that ONI will do nothing of that kind any more".

But, problems remained. Navy security needed positive attention and the scattered remnants of intelligence personnel were not enough

to handle it. In 1921, there were

19 (Badge-USNR) - only 7 intelligence officers in all of the Naval Districts.

In desperation, civilians were hired locally for the most serious investigations. And the choices were not always the best. One shadowy figure, whose history intertwined with ONI for 25 years, was found to have operated under some thirty seven aliases and worked as an agent for 13 different governments. The period of the twenties were lean years. Investigative performance was an uneven patch work accomplished by volunteer reservists with neither training nor experience. In 1930 the country was devastated by economic depression. It was a time of uncertainty. At home agitators spoke on the street corners. Intelligence observers also found cause for concern overseas. Across the Atlantic, posturing from the Reichstag were

20 (Germans) - beginning to be heard. An in the Pacific, the Imperial

21 (Japanese) - Japanese Army was on the move. Japan had occupied Manchuria and had been involved in a smoldering ~~was~~ with China since 1931. From this conflict the threats of war threatened to ignite all of the far East. The security threat to the Navy was growing and beleaguered district

22 (DIO) - intelligence officers stood as the first thin line of resistance.

About 1934, they began hiring investigators locally on a personal services basis. History has obscured the identities of most of these operatives (there were probably no more than maybe five or six) but one name remains as testimony to our weakness. Soviet espionage recruited this early ONI Agent

23 (Thug) Hoppus Soliage, and was able to obtain copies of all Naval Intelligence reports from our San Pedro Office.

The time had come to act

24 (1927-1937) - a review of intelligence preparedness done in the mid thirties, was not reassuring. Investigative assets consisted almost entirely of part-time reservists. The beginnings were hesitant but they marked the first serious step toward a fully professional base. Cautious authority was released in 1936 to formally hire civilian agents in the field and by September of 1937, a total of 14 had been brought aboard. This is the recollection of Marvin Vendara

25 (Vandera) - one of those early agents.

"I applied in November of 1937 and was actually hired in January of 1938. We had no contract at first and our credentials

26 (Credentials) - were 3 X 5 cards which were received every month from the District Intelligence Office in Great Lakes. We didn't have badges, so I went to a local outlet and got a gold one with the biggest eagle I could find for something like Two Dollars and Fifty Cents. I received assignments by phone and sometimes by letter.

27 (Letter) - This one had to do with infiltrating a meeting of the Silver Shirts. Of course I belonged to the Silver Shirts and had entered on an assumed name".

These first agents received no training

28 (Contract) - although they were used for almost every kind of case. They met the challenge with resourcefulness and enthusiasm.

"One morning, we received word from Washington that a Japanese delegation, some of the members of which were known by us to be

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* (intelligence officers of the Japanese Navy. They were going to B
* the Bendix Corporation in South Bend and, at all costs to keep them away from seeing a high altitude carburetor that was under development".

"We immediately rushed over to Steven's Hotel and found out that the three in question had already left and we went to the railroad station and the train had left."

29 (Car) - "I had a new 1939 Plymouth, and this was in late 1938 when I purchased it. I had a governor on it and it wouldn't allow it to go over 30 miles per hour but I ripped the governor off. We also had a siren and a red light. I put it down to the floor board, it was 95 miles to South Bend, Indiana but we had to beat the train, so we were just like in the movies, the gates, at one crossing were coming down and we had to race the train to the crossing."

"When we arrived at the Bendix Corporation ~~and the department in question~~ the inspector at the department in question told us that it was closed for inventory and for painting. I might add taht after that little trip to Ssouth Bend, at 90 to 95 miles per hour, my car burned oil excessivley thereafter".

★ 30 (Old Office) - In 1938 a small office was opened in the New Orleans Custom ^{★A} House. It was a lone ranger operation with one agent assigned to cover the entire 8th Naval District.

32 (Credentials) - Mr. Walter Kirsch was that man.
32A (Mr. Kirsch) "Commander Frye knew nothing about intelligence or investigative work. He was embarassing, to say the least. I would make the investigation, write up the report on my own typewriter and put it in an envelope, ¹★ seal it and slip it under the door at 333 Custom ¹²House Building." B★

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Two events in 1939 accelerated our uncertain steps: one was this executive directive

33 (White House) - which, for the first time assigned us responsibility
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- for investigating sabotage, espionage and subversion in the Navy.
- The second was a limited national emergency declared on September 8. This meant that reservists could be called up to augment the investigative ranks. Momentum was building at home, even as Germany began its move across Europe. A standard report
- 34 (Report Form) - form was developed, contracts drawn up and classes of investigators defined. Special employees,
- 35 (Badge) - agents, and
- 36 (Badge) - special agents. Applications were screened
- 37 (1939-1940) - from ages 21 to 75. The liesurely pace changed to one of frantic activity. But, on December 7, time ran out.
- 39 (Franklin Delano Roosevelt) - "A date which will live in infamy. The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked." Our foundation blocks were layed during the war years. Thousands of active duty and civilian agents raced to the flood gates of investigative requests that swelled to almost 100,000 a year. The B-3 Section, operating from a wing of the Navy Building
- 40 (Navy Building) - guided investigations during this period and fought to keep from being overwhelmed. Professional progress went steadily forward. A training manual
- 41 (Manual) - was published and the first case category system developed. Zone and unit intelligence offices were created in the districts. This was the BIO
- 42 (Two old timers) - staff in Chicago in the early forties. Commands were not always certain how to use investigative support. But, by any measure, the wartime agents gave the Navy it's moneys worth.

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- 42A (Seal) - It was the Resident Agency in Portland Maine that sounded the Nations first alert on German agents Colpar and Gimble, landed by submarine at Frenchmen's Cove. Case histories are legion with successes measured by prevention before the fact. The twice convicted arsonist who applied for a job in a Navy gunpowder plant. Jacob Bradley, the radio operator trained by the Gustapo in Oslo, picked up before his ship reached the United States. It was a superlative job and our
- 43 (Dick Tracy) - investigative corps gained respect and a permanent place in the fabric of Navy and Marine Corps security.
- 44 (1943-1980) - By 1944, the scales had tipped inexorably against Japan. War's end was nearing, and the reservists who had given such remarkable service would soon be separated. The need to retain a professional base was recognized and the small organization tailored to peacetime requirements was developed. One problem was a peg on which to hang investigative authority. In 1945
- 45 (Letter) - Secretary Forrestal issued a directive setting forth our investigative jurisdiction. It constituted the first specific authority to investigate offenses in addition to sabotage and espionage. As we grew in ~~an~~ experience, our trade was learned in the streets, through the most elementary of counter-intelligence tools, the background investigation. Agents ranged from the coastal plains,
- 46 (Credentials and Badge) - across the heartland of America. Seeking information on individuals considered for sensitive positions. Piecing together the mosaics of character was demanding work. And caseloads grew faster than agent compliment. In the Fall of

1950, our corps numbered only 136 and some agents were carrying case-loads of over two hundred apiece. The agents learned their trade in the field; their management skills from balancing case priority and their investigative doctrine, from three key leaders,

48 (Credentials of Wilson) - Mr. Dick Wilson,

49 (Willard) - Mr. Bill Willard and

50 (Lynch) - Mr. John Lynch.

Major milestones came in the fifties and sixties. A detailed investigations manual

51 (Manual) - The first definitive SECNAV instruction on jurisdiction, and

52 (Corps) - most important, the molding of the Special Agent Corps. Overseas assignments

53 (Guam) - began in 1951, when Special Agent Ray Kinnery was transferred to Guam. Others followed in the

54 (Hong Kong) - Pacific, in

55 (Naples) - Europe, wherever there was a Navy presence. The key to our development was the need for a centrally directed organization to control the world-wide network. Several methods were tried and discarded and finally in February of 1966

56 (NIS Seal) - the Naval Investigative Service came into being. The importance of NIS was that it enabled a single line of authority for investigations and counter-intelligence. Operations were standardized throughout the world and investigations now could be handled with maximum efficiency.

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- 57 (Afloat) - Afloat programs were developed to support the operating forces manned by the best of our agent force. It was a growing period for N I S. Sophisticated operations were undertaken and major strides were made in communications, in training and in management. Through the late sixties, winds of political change swept the land and as they buffeted the investigative community they again altered
- 58 (Credentials) - the face of the organization. Economies forced retrenchment and cutbacks reduced our agent force heavily. The changes tempered
- 59 (Seal, Gun and Handcuffs) - the organization and the N I S that emerged was a leaner and more seasoned striking force.
- Today, every agent in the field can rely on immediate backup in the form of operational and technical support. From Washington Headquarters the pulse beat of worldwide investigative activity is monitored around the clock and a staff of specialists is available to provide assistance in any area. Computerized file data, lab facilities and team work in research and analysis are part of an inventory that can be applied to every case and new techniques are studied daily.
- We are still changing. Our heritage has been a constant striving for improvement and today the standards of investigative excellence have never been higher. We are continuing to grow and mature in the wisdom of experience. There is a special quality to our service.
- It is the pride and character and tradition of the men and women of the Special Agent Corps.
- NIS*
- This is the Naval Investigative Story. It is a story of people. Of men and women who, through the years, have dedicated their lives

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Page 11

to forging the investigative shield that protects our Navy's integrity. It has been a long climb since the MASON MEMORANDUM and the end is not in sight. You special agents are that shield now. For the chapters yet to come, it is your loyalty and dedication that will become a part of the history of the NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE.

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