

TRIBUTE TO LOU HERDER

Former SA Al Combs contributed the following as a memorial to the late Lou Herder



DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE OFFICE THIRTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT

1950 - 1968

On 6 November 1950, I stepped, somewhat blindly, into the world of Naval Intelligence, having shed a high school teaching contract in Oregon for a contract with the Director of Naval Intelligence for the princely sum of \$3,640.00 per annum. This contract, under which all agents labored until assimilation into the Civil Service System in 1969, could be terminated by either side with 30 days notice and no reason given.

Depending on one's point of view, I was either the ninth or tenth agent in DIO13ND, one other agent having been hired that same day. It should be noted I used the term "Agent" rather than "Special Agent" for at that time the only Special Agents in ONI were those working in ONI Headquarters, located in the Pentagon. For a number of years Agents were not allowed to use that title routinely, or to refer to Naval Intelligence. In person, and on public documents, we were to identify ourselves as Research Analysts, employed by the 13th Naval District. During interviews we were to identify ourselves as being from "Navy Headquarters in Seattle." It was hard to understand the subtlety, especially since our credentials bore the signature and title of the Director of Naval Intelligence. In addition, our 1953 credentials had "U.S. Naval Intelligence" in bold letters.

The DIO spaces were located within the 13ND compound in a one-story building across the street from the Commandant's office. The official address was 1611 West Wheeler Street. Wheeler Street was a one-block lane with the 13ND perimeter fence on the south side and a city garbage dump (now a golf course) on the north.

The DIO, Navy Captain John E. Edwards, was a destroyer sailor with no intelligence or investigative experience. His Executive Officer, a Commander whose name I cannot recall, had been an attache. Other Navy officers assigned included: Navy LT Don Redlin, who ran the counter-intelligence section. LT Redlin was a decorated former Marine, having distinguished himself at Saipan. As a Japanese linguist, LT Redlin was credited with coaxing a number of Japanese out of caves rather than committing suicide. The noted author, John Toland, credits Don Redlin's experiences as the basis for one of the characters in his novel, "God's War."

The OpIntel, or "Y" Branch was led by LCDR Meredith (Rip) Riddle, one of the most capable naval officers I ever encountered. LCDR Riddle's WWII experiences were the basis for a movie and TV series "The Wackiest Ship in the Army." A former "mustang" Riddle was eventually promoted to Captain and in his last assignment, served as Commanding Officer of NISO Hawaii. Upon retirement from the Navy, Captain Riddle was employed as a vice-president of Dillingham Corporation, one of the five major industries in Hawaii.

A component of DIO13ND was the Reserve Intelligence Program Office located in an adjacent building. In 1950, the RIPO was Commander W.J. Young, who was transferred in early 1951 and was replaced by CDR (later Captain) Jim McCabe.

My recollection of officer personnel is somewhat hazy in that many were quiet, competent officers who did their jobs efficiently and others stood out for one reason or another. At the time I was hired, a LT John Allen, a Seattle resident, was recalled to active duty in an administrative capacity. For reasons best left unsaid, he departed through administrative procedures and returned to a position at the University of Washington.

One of the earliest Executive Officers was CDR Marvin Van Dera, who had been a pre-war agent with ONI and later served as a RIPO in the Ninth Naval District. CDR Van Dera can best be described as a flamboyant, self-centered person, never at a loss for words and an expert at self-promotion. He was later relieved by CDR Raymond Kotria, a career Naval Intelligence Officer whose previous duty had been as Naval Attache in Phnom Penh, Cambodia during the early stages of the Vietnam war.

In the mid-1960's CDR (later Captain) Alan Bath was XO to Captain Martin. CDR Bath and his wife were cat lovers and upon their transfer to Hawaii, were required to place their six cats in quarantine for an expensive period of six months.

Other officers I recall were CDR Bob Martin, who headed the Reserve Telecommunications Program and who, for a time, was acting DIO; LT (later Captain) Jack Clark, an exceptionally fine officer; LT (later Captain) Rick Cassucci, a career intelligence officer who held CO billets in other Districts/NISOs, LT Dusty Rhodes, A well-to-do Seattleite, and LT Vince (LNU), who, after leaving active duty, came to the attention of Al Combs and me in a less-than-complimentary way.

The spaces occupied by the DIO were a mish-mash. The building contained only two offices, one for the DIO and the other jointly occupied by the ADIO and CADIO (Civilian Assistant to the DIO), a position occupied at that time by Robert (Bob) King, a Naval Reserve Captain. The billet appeared to have no defined duties, an opinion shared by ONI, and in the early 1950's the position was abolished throughout ONI. There was a partition at the opposite end of the building which separated the E and Y branches. Otherwise, the central portion of the building, sans any partitions, was occupied by agents and clerical personnel. There were two small adjoining rooms which served as a Technical Equipment storage area and the other an interrogation room. Sometime in 1952, the offices were moved across the street into the second deck of the Commandant's building. Several years later the DIO was moved to a more professional setting at the Sand Point Naval Air Station.

Throughout my 23 years with ONI/NIS, the most contentious equipment problem was automobiles. In November, 1950, DIO13ND had 12 automobiles. The two newest were 1947 Chevrolets and the remainder were pre-war Plymouths. My first road trip was taken in a 1940 Plymouth with over 300,000 miles. That road trip was to Oregon. My first emergency stop was in Tacoma to replace a broken fan belt. The second emergency stop occurred in Astoria, Oregon to have the emergency brake repaired. Fortunately, in March, 1951, we were assigned 10 new Plymouth sedans. Morale improved mightily!

Having served in 13ND, 11ND, NISHQ and in the Philippines, and having met many agents and their families, the best of these by far was 13ND. Two reasons stand out - the beauty of the Pacific Northwest and the people who made DIO13ND such a great place to work. Here are those with whom I worked at the start:

Since there was no formal office structure in 1950, the agent in charge was John T. "Pappy" Holmes, a gifted writer and a most eloquent public speaker. Pappy Holmes had little formal education but made up for it in many ways. He was a Canadian and came to ONI from previous employment with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In early 1951, Pappy retired and was replaced by a Naval Reserve Officer, LT (later Captain) Bill Hall, under whom I had served in the Naval Reserve Unit in Portland. More about Bill Hall later.

The next senior agent was George Park, who was one of my two mentors throughout my time in 13ND. George was a China Marine (he always referred to Marines as "God's finest"), one of the 4th Marines in Shanghai. After his enlistment expired, he was

immediately hired as a detective on the Shanghai Municipal Police Force, a multi-national group. George attended one of the first FBI National Academy classes in Quantico and ended up as President of his class. Following graduation, he returned to Nebraska and married his high school sweetheart, taking her back to Shanghai. Shortly thereafter, she contracted tuberculosis. As her condition worsened and the Japanese were making their move on Shanghai, George cast about for another position in the U.S. and in 1940, left Shanghai as the Japanese were entering the city. He had received a job offer from ONI in Seattle. When reporting for duty in Seattle, he learned that the DIO was actually a well known private detective named Luke S. May. Shortly after George's arrival in Seattle his wife died. George's early years in Seattle were spent on surveillances, largely of Japanese consular officials and Russian Naval Officers assigned to the Purchasing Commission. In addition, George spent a good share of WWII working in an undercover capacity at the Naval Supply Center, uncovering and thwarting thefts. Sometime in the 1960's, George suffered a major heart attack during an interrogation at the Bremerton Navy Yard and owed his life to the quick thinking of Special Agent Al Seafeldt who was assisting George and quickly recognized what was happening, broke off the interrogation and got George to a doctor/hospital. George, for a variety of reasons, transferred to Honolulu in the early 1960's. He decided to retire on 31 May 1965 and, along with his wife, Lena, and Bob King and his wife, was to leave on a world cruise. Sadly, however, several days before retiring, George suffered a fatal heart attack. The Commanding Officer of a Navy vessel on which George had worked offered to take Lena, along with George's ashes, to sea for burial. As a result, George's remains were scattered on the Pacific Ocean near Pearl Harbor.

A father figure for many of us was Frank Shane. Frank had been a Pinkerton Detective for a number of years and joined ONI at the outbreak of WWII. Like George, he also had a hand in the many surveillances underway at the outset of the war. The big question at the time was to determine which of the Soviets was GRU and from George, and later Bert Walker, I learned that it was Frank who was the first to pick out the right one. Frank's principal WWII assignment was the Bremerton Navy Yard. As an aside, Frank, for a number of years, operated a side business. He ran a firm in charge of security and ticket takers at the University of Washington Athletic Department. Somehow a Seattle sports writer happened to mention Frank in a column which was seen by the DIO. The DIO went ballistic with the result that Frank turned the business over to his son. Many of us owe much to Frank for his patient counseling, as well as for the time spent passing on to us his report-writing skills which were the very best. Frank retired from ONI in the mid-1960's.

Bill Coleman, a WWII yeoman assigned to DIO13ND, was immediately hired as an agent at the end of the war. Bill was one of those quiet, unassuming persons who was competent in so many areas and an all-around outstanding agent. It was my good fortune to accompany Bill on two undercover cases of the Catetory 3 variety, one in CONUS and one OUTCONUS. Watching Bill operate in those highly stressful environments was a great learning experience for me. Like Frank, Bill also was a gifted writer. It is my recollection that at the time of the NIS/DIS split, Bill became the SAC of the Seattle DIS office.

Harry Whitmore, like Bill, was a WWII yeoman who stayed on as an agent following the war. Harry's specialty was records. He knew where any and all records could be found in the Seattle area. He proved to be extremely generous with his time in helping those of us who were neophytes in the investigative business. Harry retired from NIS in the 1960's.

Robert (Bob) Eveleigh was recruited at about the same time as Rufus Boldman and Al Combs. He was a graduate of the University of Washington in a discipline similar to City Planning. Bob was a quiet, yet competent agent and left after several years to take a position with the City of Seattle in some planning function.

Rufus (Rufe) Boldman graduated from Washington State College, majoring in Police Science and commenced employment in December, 1949. On his first day, his wife, Penny, was afflicted with a severe case of multiple sclerosis, rendering her completely paralyzed. She eventually regained the use of her arms and legs and she and Rufe had two more children. A staunch Mormon and a very fine investigator, Rufe eventually persuaded the office to open a Resident Agency in Pocatello, Idaho, making it possible for him to travel to Salt Lake City on occasion. Following retirement, Rufe was employed at the Navy Nuclear Facility near Idaho Falls for a time and passed away at a relatively early age.

Al Combs, a fellow graduate of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, came to ONI by a round-about way. Al was one of four L&C students who were enticed into seeking commissions in the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program. ONI was favorably impressed by his BI and in December, 1949, offered Al an agent's position in Seattle. After two years in Seattle, Al was tapped to open a Resident Agency in Portland in early 1952. At the time of the formation of the Defense Investigative Service (DIS), Al was one of the few agents personally approached by the then-Deputy Director of NIS, Jack Lynch, in an effort to keep him in NIS. He was specifically offered a SRA assignment in Southern California but opted to transfer to DIS. Al later became agent in charge of the DIS office in East Lansing, Michigan and even later served as SAC of their office at Griffis Air Force Base, Rome, New York. Following his retirement, Al and his wife, Linda, elected to live on the East coast, first in Remsen, NY and later in North Creek, NY.

Jim Art and I came aboard the same day. Jim was a graduate of the University of Washington in Accounting. He was never particularly happy as an agent and his wife became most unhappy over his occasional road trips. In early 1952, Jim was selected to attend one of the first Basic Agents' Course at ONI. Shortly after returning to Seattle, Jim resigned for a position with a paper company in Everett, Washington.

My progression to ONI was identical in many ways to that of Al Combs, through the Reserve Intelligence Program. At the outbreak of the Korean War, I was in my final semester of graduate study. The building, which was occupied by agents and clerical personnel, was divided into two small adjoining rooms which served as a Technical Equipment storage area and the other an interrogation room. Sometime in 1952, the offices were moved across the street into the second deck of the Commandant's building. Several years later the DIO was moved to a more professional setting at the Sand Point Naval Air Station.

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A word about the various DIO's/CO's during my stay in 13ND. As I mentioned earlier, the DIO at the time of my employment was Captain John E. Edwards (not to be confused with Captain John Q. Edwards, a highly respected former Director of NIS). Captain Edwards was a destroyer skipper with no previous intelligence or investigative experience. In fact, of the eight DIO's/CO's, only two had any previous intelligence experience and none had any investigative experience. Two had had previous duty in earlier DIO assignments.

In 1951, Captain Edwards was transferred and replaced by Captain Robert Fahle, who came to the assignment from a previous attache assignment. Upon his departure in 1953, CDR Robert Martin, a Reserve Telecommunications Officer, served as acting DIO for several months until relieved by Captain James Flenniken, a submariner. To the eventual great joy of the agent corps, the Navy changed the rules, hastening Captain Flenniken's retirement. The time-honored retirement rank of "tombstone admiral, bestowed upon retiring Captains who held wartime medals, was abolished and not wanting to lose the title, Captain Flenniken took early retirement.

He was replaced by Captain Donald Todd, another destroyer skipper. Captain (then CDR) Todd is prominently mentioned in Richard Newcomb's book, "Abandon Ship," detailing the sinking of the USS INDIANAPOLIS. Captain Todd was SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat) during the search phase after the survivors were discovered and had to make the fateful decision to halt the search not knowing if any others might have been afloat but unseen.

Captain Todd was replaced by CDR William Bliss, who had previously been assigned as Reserve Intelligence Program Officer at ONI Headquarters. During his tenure, there were those who strongly felt that actual command of the DIO rested with the

District Legal Officer, Captain Hugh Miller.

The last two DIO's/CO's were undoubtedly the two best in terms of caring for, and taking an interest in, the agent corps. Captain Ed Martin transferred in from DIO 8ND (New Orleans) and was in Seattle at the time of transition to the Naval Investigative Service in February, 1966. Captain Martin, a somewhat flamboyant person, had an illustrious WWII record and is prominently mentioned in the book, "A Different Kind of War" by Vice Admiral Milton Miles. Admiral Miles commanded a group known as SACO, Sino-American Cooperative Organization, operating in China.

The last CO during my 13ND tenure was Captain Harold Ellison, who transferred in from his previous assignment as CO of NISO Charleston. These two officers did more for the agents of 13ND than all their predecessors combined.

Although not a CO or XO, one of the most interesting officers and a real asset to the office during the early 1960's was LCDR Louis (Lou) Lindenmeyer who came to 13ND from a wide range of fleet duty and Vietnam duty. He was a quiet, low-key officer, very effective in his work and well liked by everyone.

I had perhaps the shortest training period in the history of ONI. On my first day, Pappy Holmes outlined my training program, there being no formal program throughout ONI. I would be spending two weeks in the office reading manuals, reading cases and becoming familiar with the files and filing system. After two weeks I would be paired with another agent doing background investigations. However, it didn't happen that way. On my second day, November 7, Pappy had me accompany George Park to Bremerton (PSNY) where he was working a wrongful destruction case (someone had cut wires to the Interior Communications panel on an LST being recommissioned for Korea). It took George about three hours to identify the culprit and secure a confession.

Prior to leaving PSNY, George called Headquarters reporting the results and was given another assignment at Bangor, at that time a Naval Ammunition Depot. The Master of a merchant vessel loading ammunition for Korea reported a civilian crewman who allegedly was spouting pro-communist ideas and was encouraging crew mates to sign various peace petitions. A search of the seaman's locker produced numerous copies of the west-coast CP newspaper as well as other pro-communist literature. The seaman was turned over to the FBI and was removed from the ship. By the time we returned to Seattle, it was after 2 am the following day. The unpredictability of ONI life was brought home to Gloria very early on. The following Monday, November 13, Pappy handed me 12 cases and the keys to a 1940 Plymouth and sent me on a one-week trip to Oregon. For all practical purposes, formal training ended.

Until the advent of autodin and electronic reporting, all dissemination of ONI reports/leads was by U.S. mail. Two forms prevailed throughout ONI. A yellow-colored form (Form 152) served as a Notice of Case Pending and was also used to disseminate leads. A blue form (Form 119) served as a Report of Investigation. DIO 13ND was largely a BI district, in that we handled many more BI's than criminal cases. Early on, agents would write their reports, turn them in to Pappy Holmes and that would end their responsibility. It should be noted that all cases, even clear BI's, were typed by agents in detail and all were written in the first person. For instance, "John Smith, of apparent reliability, stated substantially as follows: 'I have known....' The case would then go to the stenos, chief among them being Josephine (Jo) Allen and Louise Beauchemin. They would then type the 119 and

send it to Pappy who would see to its dissemination. That all ended with the arrival of Bill Hall, who took over D Branch at the time of Pappy's retirement in early 1951. One of Bill's first actions was to make each agent responsible for the 119 in its smooth form and required the agent's initials before reaching his desk. The first-person reporting slowly evolved into the more professional third-person report, largely through the influence of Frank Shane.

Bill Hall was a reservist called to active duty. In civilian life he was an economist for the Bureau of Public Roads and had been the commanding officer of the Reserve Intelligence Unit in Portland. He had served in DIO13ND during WWII, having worked in both Bremerton and Seattle. Bill was immensely popular with the agent corps. He immediately instituted a training program every Tuesday afternoon, covering photography, fingerprinting, interrogations, interviews, polygraph and the newly enacted Uniform Code of Military Justice. He also established the first in-house performance evaluation form for agents.

In late 1952, Bill Hall was released from active duty and was replaced by LCDR William (Bill) Vogt. Bill Vogt had been a WWII Intelligence officer and following that, had been in a partnership in a highly successful drive-in restaurant venture in San Diego. At the outset of the Korean War, Bill was recalled and assigned to DIO 17ND, Kodiak, Alaska. He, too, was well liked and highly regarded by the agents and served in Seattle until late 1955. He then served in ONI, then as the IO, COMNAVMARIANAS. He was later reassigned to ONI/NIS Headquarters and was the first Deputy Director of NIS. His last NIS tour was as XO of NISO San Diego.

Sometime in 1955, ONI changed the civilian command structure within each DIO by establishing the civilian Supervising Agent position. Some of the larger districts had supervising agents at the PG-13 level and the smaller districts, including 13ND, were PG-12's. The first supervising Agent in 13ND was Walter McKee, who was previously assigned in San Diego. Walt was an extremely aggressive person, sometimes innovative, but a sense of insecurity was to cause him problems which led to his resignation in 1957.

His replacement, Al Shears, had been a wartime officer agent in San Francisco and later became a civilian agent. Al was the right man for the position, given the unrest that marked the tenure of his predecessor. He was a good, calm leader and was well respected by his fellow agents. Al retired in 1966 and remained in Seattle until his death in 2000.

Some six years after Al Shears became the Supervising Agent, ONI established a second supervisory level in 13ND, that of Assistant Supervising Agent, a position filled by George Gurnee, a transfer from DIO3ND (New York). George served in that post until transferring to NISO Philippines in the late 1960's/early 1970's.

Following Al Shears' retirement, NIS assigned Lloyd Beck, at the time an Assistant in New Orleans, as Supervising Agent. Lloyd, a WWII yeoman, had served as an agent in Charleston and later in New Orleans. In 1968 he transferred to NISO Philippines as Supervising Agent.

During the Walt McKee period, ONI had established a Code 40 billet encompassing counterintelligence duties. None of the agent corps was aware of the opening until it was learned that Dick Casad from 11ND had been given the position. Dick, a Seattle native, served in that assignment until the mid-1960's, at which time he transferred to London. At the time of his transfer, Dick made it known he had extracted a promise from Headquarters that upon completion of his tour in Europe he would be returned to Seattle. His replacement in Seattle was Dennis Tipton.

In my first meeting with Dennis, I mentioned the promise Casad had extracted, which came as a complete surprise to Dennis, something never disclosed to him by Headquarters. I later learned that upon completion of Dick Casad's tour in London, NIS made every effort to have him transfer into a promotion position in NIS Headquarters; however, he was insistent upon returning to Seattle, a move that worked against him at the time of the NIS/DIS split. As Seattle was no longer a NISO, Dick's billet was abolished and he was demoted from 13 to 12 and given an ASAC billet.

Probably the most highly regarded, well-liked and respected individual in DIO13ND/NISO Seattle was Mrs. Freddie Scott. She was undoubtedly the best Code 30 type I ever met throughout NIS. Not only was she attractive, she was also competent, kind, witty and the glue that held the office together in stormy times.

A word about personnel. The first personnel change during my tenure occurred in 1952 with the resignation of Jim Art who opted for private industry. The head of D Branch, Bill Hall, upon learning of Jim's resignation, placed a phone call to Portland, contacting Charles R. (Chuck) Schaeffer, who had been a member of the Reserve Intelligence Unit in Portland. Chuck, at the time, was a salesman for Dun and Bradstreet and took a 50% cut in salary to come to work for ONI. Chuck proved to be a thoroughly competent investigator and was, without question, one of the finest technical experts in ONI. In the late 1960's, Chuck was transferred to a one-man office in Bremerhaven, Germany and later served in Greece. Upon retirement, Chuck and his family returned to Vancouver, Washington.

Lillian Vogt, the wife of LCDR Bill Vogt, was car shopping one day in Seattle and in a conversation with the salesman, learned that he had once been employed by another intelligence agency and was not much interested in selling cars. Lillian told him that her husband was in Naval Intelligence and gave the salesman Bill Vogt's phone number. Shortly thereafter Jim Sorensen came aboard and became a valuable member of the organization. Jim served in Seattle for a number of years and later became the resident agent in Spokane, Washington. After retirement, Jim was a contract agent for MSM Security Services. Sadly, he later succumbed to cancer.

On my first day in Seattle I was asked the same question by both Frank Shane and ~~George Morse~~ ^{George Morse}, knowing I was from Oregon. "Do you know Bert Walker?" I didn't know Bert but knew of him through my brother who had worked indirectly for Bert with the Oregon State Police. Bert had been a WWII officer agent in Seattle and in Portland. After returning to the OSP, he was promoted to Captain and headed the Game Enforcement Branch. Becoming fed up with bureaucratic fumbling in OSP, Bert was hired by ONI and for a period of eight years served in DIO17ND, Kodiak, Alaska. In 1962, Bert was transferred to 13ND and established a one-man RA in Salem, Oregon. Entire books could be written on Bert Walker, probably one of the most respected and best-liked agents we had and a great asset to the Portland office. Bert was single-handedly responsible for an intelligence coup that is still viable today. Following retirement, Bert's wife, Louise, suffered a serious illness of a degenerative nature. After her death, Bert remarried and lived in Keizer, Oregon until his death in 1988.

In the early 1950's, Al Combs personally recruited a high-school classmate who, like Al, proved to be a most competent and well-liked agent - George Morse. George spent his first six months with Al and me in the Portland office and was later transferred to Seattle. After a time he opened a one-man RA at ~~the~~ Whidbey Island. In 1968 or 1969, George was transferred and became the SAC at NISRA, Orlando, Florida. Still later he became the SAC at NISRA Keflavik, Iceland and finally served as SAC at NISRA Mare Island, California. Upon retiring, George and Amy returned to their home on Whidbey Island.

The experience level at DIO13ND took a quantum leap with the hiring of Cecil G. (Guy) Kenney. Guy had been a WWII officer and between wars worked as a federal investigator. Prior to his assignment in 13ND in the mid 1950's, Guy had served on active duty in ONI Headquarters.

Several Seattle-area residents were hired by ONI and sent to other areas. This was the case with Ron Bright, who was assigned originally in DIO9ND (Chicago) but had the good sense to work his way back to DIO13ND. Ron was a natural for the office at PSNY, Bremerton. Ron and I sort of followed each other around, geographically. In the late 1960's, Ron was selected as SAC at newly opened NISRA North Island (San Diego), where he successfully handled several of the most high profile cases in that very busy district. He then became SAC at NISRA, NAS Danvers, California and later was placed in charge of one of the "Crimes Against..." desks in the Criminal Investigations Division of NISHQ. He later was transferred to Guam. Ron, along with Blair Gluba, conducted several of the best-received classes in the NIS Basic Agents Class.

The second area resident to be hired elsewhere was Al Seafeldt, who found himself assigned to Norfolk, Virginia. Like Ron, he realized there was no place like Seattle and worked his way back, serving at Bremerton and Seattle. Al was probably the most tenacious investigator in the DIO, and I have often said that if I had something in my background I didn't want divulged, I would pray hard that my SI was never assigned to Al. After some 20 years in Seattle, Al was transferred to NISO Hawaii and later returned to Seattle. Upon retirement, Al was one of the better investigators working for MSM Security Services.

There were a number of very fine agents in Seattle with whom I had a passing acquaintance. Names that come to mind are Stan Sagara and his running mate, "Roo Racey" (Lou Lacey), Wally Beazley, who opened an office in Montana, Merlyn "Doc" Fisher, LT Paul Brown, whose father was a former U.S. Senator from Michigan, John Hunt, an Agent of the Year selectee by NISHQ who later transferred to the FBI, Ed Peistrup, Merlyn Twitchell, Al Backstrom, Lou Lambert, who started as an officer agent, later became an agent and still later left for the FBI, Harry Stovall and a tall fellow, Roger, whose last name I can't recall and who was a Japanese linguist. Also, Harold Hoem, Bill Wittenberger and undoubtedly others, but time has taken a toll on my memory bank.

During the 15 years Al Combs and I worked together in Portland, we were blessed with a great group of agents. I wish I could at this stage of life be certain as to the order of arrival, but as near as I can recall Larry Skinner was the first. A graduate of Washington State University, Larry adapted easily to Portland and was great to have around. After several years, Larry transferred to Yokosuka, Japan, and upon return to 13ND, opened an office in Montana.

Sometime in 1960, Don Mitchell transferred to Portland from Guam, having previously served in Kodiak, Alaska. Don was the proverbial "ball of fire" but with one objective, a transfer to Seattle. In 1962 he was transferred to Seattle and after several years, was transferred to Honolulu. At the time of the NIS/DIS split, Don was scheduled for transfer to NISRA Port Hueneme, California as SAC, but worked many angles at the Headquarters level and effected a move to DIS, remaining in Honolulu where he still resides.

In 1962, just prior to Don Mitchell's transfer, Bert Walker transferred in from Alaska, opening a one-man MA in Salem, Oregon and covering Salem, Corvallis, Eugene and much of the southern Oregon coast. Many were the times Al and I turned to Bert for advice and counsel and not once were we ever led astray. A real jewel!

A most welcome addition was Dick Payne, a native Oregonian and graduate of Oregon State University. After duty aboard USS ASHTABULA, Dick was assigned to Seattle as an officer agent. Upon release from active duty he was immediately hired as a civilian Special Agent. A tireless worker, Dick probably still hasn't forgiven me for a couple of things, one an incident I foisted on him one morning. A Navy vessel was in Portland for the American Legion National Convention. I saw a brief newspaper article stating that a Navy enlisted man had been arrested for burglary near a downtown Portland mortuary and, since I was leaving town, I asked Dick to check it out. He found himself in the midst of a necrophiliac investigation, a case that later fell in Ron Bright's lap as the enlisted man was eventually placed in the psychiatric ward at Bremerton Naval Hospital. In 1967, Dick was tapped by NISHQ for transfer to Headquarters where he served in all of the major investigative department codes - 22, 23 and lastly in code 21, the BI division. At the time of the NIS/DIS split, Dick was involuntarily transferred to DIS and after a time returned to Seattle as SAC of the DIS Seattle office.

At the time of Dick's departure, we gained a real "jewel" with the arrival of Laddie Hancock. Laddie came to us from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, required little training and was a productive agent from the very first. A measure of Laddie's ability was shown by the fact that with only 18 months experience with NIS, Laddie was selected as one of 50 NIS agents conducting the debriefings of the crew of USS PUEBLO upon their return to San Diego after being held by the North Koreans. Interestingly, in point of service with NIS, Laddie was the junior agent, but he more than held his own. After several years in Portland, Laddie transferred to Okinawa, at that time the busiest office in NIS with respect to criminal investigations. After five years in Okinawa, Laddie transferred to Cory Field near Pensacola, Florida and later left NIS for a more responsible position in the private sector. He recently retired as Chief of Police in Central Point, Oregon and is now a Special Agent with DSS on Whidbey Island.

We were joined for a time in Portland by Randy Roberts. Regrettably, I lost track of Randy after he left Portland, however, I believe that after leaving NIS, he returned to a family business on Whidbey Island.

For the first several years in Portland, Al and I had no clerical support. We would prepare our cases in rough form, send them to Seattle for typing and would never see them again. Eventually, however, we were assigned military personnel of varying abilities and qualities. Our first yeoman, a wave whose name I cannot recall, was a Portland native who had been the lead vocalist for a popular dance band. She came with some personal "baggage" but on balance proved to be a reliable secretary. She was followed by Willie Wilson, a IN2. Willis was followed by Leonard Surry, supposedly a YN1 but operating at the level of a YNSN. Surry received orders to NISO Japan but never made it, his orders having been changed and he was assigned to a non-sensitive billet. He was replaced by Bob Bruhahn, a quiet, steady, plodding yeoman.

The DIO was sympathetic to Al's and my pleas that it was time for a more permanent clerical staff, preferably a civilian. To that end, we were able to interview and hire two of the best I ever encountered in NIS. The first, Jan Wimberly, was a graduate of a local bible college. Jan was everything one would want in a secretary. When the office expanded, and a second secretarial slot opened, Jan recommended a classmate, Joan Verme. Jan and Joan were a tremendous pair and their work was outstanding. After leaving NIS, ~~both Jan and~~ Joan married Christian missionaries and spent time on overseas missions. ~~Jan married a doctor~~

To those of you who read this, keep one thing in mind - these are the musings of a 75 year-old memory, sometimes prone to forgetfulness. I'm certain there are those whom I have forgotten, unintentionally. Feel free to let me know who should be included and a revision will be forthcoming. As I have read over these names from the past, I have felt both pride and gratitude - gratitude for having been part of a great DIO with so many friends.

Lou Herder

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and now resides
in Bush, Ill.