

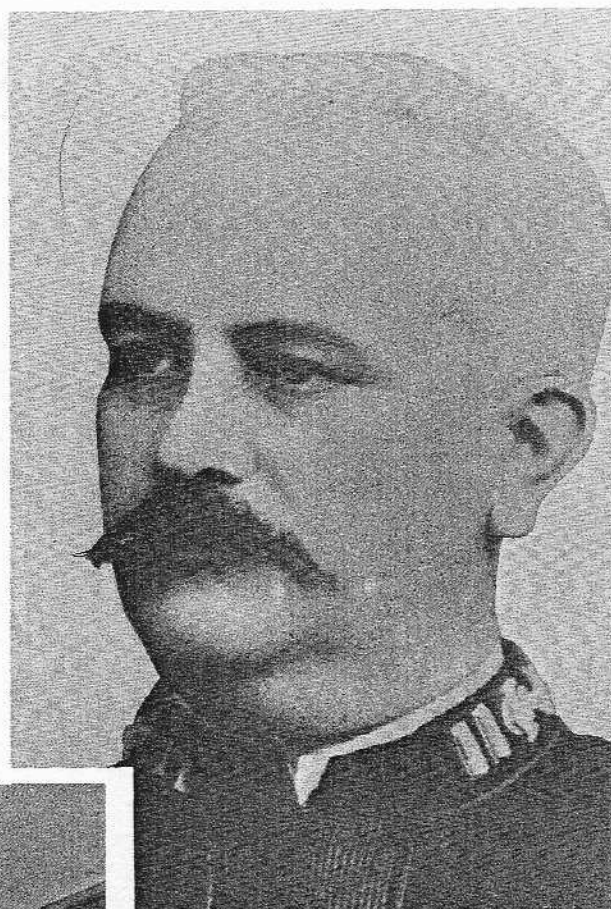
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COUNTERPOINT

Mr Albert F. Deahl



Founder Lt Theodorus B. M. Mason



NIS today

Shadows in the Glass

Against America's bicentennial tapestry, the pantheon of our military heroes is once again astir. As attention refocuses on the past, schoolboys are gaining a new acquaintance with the larger than life figures of our heritage — Washington, John Paul Jones, Theodorus B. M. Mason . . .

Investigative Interface in Naval Intelligence

Theodorus B. M. Mason?

Well, in some cases perhaps less than passing. Though his niche is secure as the father of ONI, Lieutenant Mason is an infrequent footnote to most histories. This sort of obscurity in the intelligence profession is not surprising. Defoe, for example, is well known as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. His role as

founder of the British Secret Service is much less so.

But the ability to operate in the low profile of a more pastoral age is gone — swept aside by the spotlight of public scrutiny that now surrounds all aspects of intelligence. Techniques and protocols are under challenge. Actions once applauded are now subject to disapprobation. "It may have been proper at the time," revisionists would argue, "But even if it were legal you shouldn't have done it because it isn't proper now!"

Whatever the merits, the present climate has caused an intensive reappraisal, particularly among the military intelligence services. Given the commonality of purpose, why the different approaches? How do the others do business? What seems to work and what doesn't.

A Different Drummer

Navy's single house approach to investigations and counterintelligence is different than Army's. This is not to say that either's course is necessarily the correct one. As Thoreau observed, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."

But, he added, "Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Separate paths have certainly been the case. For those who view intelligence at least in part as a product of the investigative process, the Navy way makes sense. On the other hand, to the doctrinaire it is a simple case of mixing apples and oranges.

In practice, of course, there is a middle ground in both services, subject to the ebb and flow of policy changes as new taskings are assimilated and others discarded. Over the years Navy has reconfigured as frequently as anyone else in seeking to find what works best. After a number of experiments they have settled on a single, centrally directed organization for the prosecution of major criminal investigations, counterintelligence and related security matters. Departmental responsibility for both Navy and Marine Corps is assigned to the Commander, Naval Intelligence Command, and the mission accomplished by his major field activity, the Naval Investigative Service. This approach is not unique in the military intelligence community. What sets it apart is the development of a close-knit team of civilian professionals to do the job.

If a single precept underlies NIS effectiveness, it is that the quality of the organization is directly proportional to the calibre of the Special Agent corps. Applicants must meet the highest selection standards, and are handpicked after intensive screening at the field and headquarters level. Training is continuous. The thorough grounding in constitutional and criminal law essential to the investigative discipline is reinforced in basic and advanced schooling at the NIS Academy. Training is also provided in technical specialties, counterintelligence and related fields at the Academy and other government facilities. On-the-job experience is gained under the guidance of seasoned journeymen and supervisors.

Although they operate under firmly centralized direction, NIS agents are involved in a wide range of responsibility. As a result, they probably have more opportunity to exercise independent judgment than any comparable organization, and it is this in large measure that contributes to the versatility that characterizes the Service. A Special Agent Afloat supporting an underway Task Group may be occupied with a serious criminal offense one day, and a counterespionage operation the next. Whatever the assignment, each man has the backup of the entire worldwide organization available on a twenty-four hour basis.

To understand Navy's present way of doing business one needs to look at the evolutionary process that has brought it about. The road has had its share of twists and turns, and more than a little misdirection en route. If the present posture seems forward looking, it was not always thus.

The Mason Memorandum

Since the time of Noah, seafaring men have had a need for intelligence. And, like Noah's dove, collection ability was pretty much dependent on individual enterprise. For the Navy, this situation essentially prevailed through the first century of independence. As late as the 1850's what passed for intelligence remained little more than haphazard collections of information, jealously guarded by the separate bureaus. When manifest destiny (or commercial imperative) tapped doughty Commodore Perry to open a window on Japan, he had no naval intelligence whatever to draw upon. Instead, he had to sort through book dealers in London, Holland and New York, gathering what literature and charts were available. His success in history, but it took

the Navy another thirty years to remedy the deficiency in its own house.

Mason
The man most responsible for bringing about the change was Theodorus Mason. A Lieutenant in the Bureau of Navigation, his perception was simply that there ought to be a central point for this enterprise, and at least minimal guidelines to accompany it. The manner in which he reached the ear of Navy Secretary Hunt is not known, but his success was evidenced by a General Order issued in March of 1882, that for the first time established an "Office of Naval Intelligence" for the purpose of "collecting and recording such naval information as may be useful to the Department in time of war, as well as peace."

A simplistic approach, perhaps, but a start. For Mason, the next step was to draft a guidance directive that appointed himself as the Chief. Over the next three years he shepherded his fledgling staff from a small office in the War and Navy building, in the shadow of the still uncapped Washington Monument. Gazing across the crenellated battlements, he may well have wondered if both were not missing a point. His group consisted of only a handful of officers and a borrowed clerk, and support was lukewarm at best. There were some modest achievements — the naval attache system, for one, was inaugurated with the assignment of Lieutenant Commander French E. Chadwick to London — but it took another sixteen years for the explosion of the Maine to jolt congress into appropriating funds for naval intelligence.

Although ONI came to earn a grudging acceptance, its regard can be judged by the internal scramble at the outset of the Spanish-American war. At the first hint of engagement, the entire staff bailed out to join with the operating forces, leaving naval intelligence in the hands of a retired Captain in charge of the Lighthouse Service and (promotion being relatively slow at that time) a retired Ensign. Lieutenant Mason was mercifully gone from the scene, having retired in ill health.

Attache collection, now expanded to posts throughout Europe, made substantive contributions in support of the Naval War Board, but it is interesting to note that to this point and beyond, counterintelligence and investigations still remained the responsibility of individual commands. As late as 1913, when plans of the battleship Pennsylvania were stolen, the Navy turned not to ONI but to the Burns Detective Agency for assistance.

The Great War

The state of readiness during these years was commented on by Colonel John Russell, who later went on to become one of the Marine Corps' most distinguished Commandants. "During the summer of 1913," he recalled, "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, but it met with disapproval and I was sent to Mexico."

If the urgings of Colonel Russell could be ignored, the spreading conflict in Europe could not. A Navy "General Plan" developed in 1915 assigned to naval intelligence the job of collecting information on domestic threats. Further impetus came in July of the following year, when a forty million dollar explosion ripped apart a Jersey City munitions dock. Called the "Black Tom" incident, it was attributed to German saboteurs. Within days a hasty program was submitted to the CNO proposing the creation of a Naval District Information Service, to be headed in each district by an Aid for Information. For peacetime, the somewhat woolly instructions were to keep posted a "secret war portfolio;" with the advent of hostilities, his true mission of counterintelligence and investigations was to surface. In this roundabout way recognition was finally accorded to the need for a professionally directed approach.

The counterintelligence units under the Aids were collectively designated the Naval Secret Service, with the first investigators known as Secret Service Agents. But as activity burgeoned at various levels these titles fell into disuse, and all operatives were credentialed as Special Agents of the Office of Naval Intelligence. Russell was back from Mexico, and his once-maligned reorganization plan went immediately into effect. In the fall of 1916 an undercover "Branch Office" was opened in New York City under the direct supervision of ONI. Others followed in the country's major seaports and manufacturing centers, manned by naval reservists and civilians. Their beats were the waterfronts, and war activities that touched in any way on ships or shipping. The successes of these men and women were impressive. While documentation is somewhat sketchy, in less than three years some eighteen German spies were reportedly surfaced by them.

In addition to the District and Branch Office networks, ONI established covert units over-

seas, with agents seeded in Mexico, South America and the Caribbean well before the United States entered the war. One such was headed by "Flaming Youth" cartoonist John Held, Jr., who with three naval intelligence colleagues operated under the guise of an archaeological research expedition, seeking out potential hiding places for German submarines in Central American waters.

From the outbreak of the war, ONI Headquarters expanded from eight to over six hundred reservists, directing counterintelligence and investigative activity on a global basis. Coordinating both Headquarters and locally directed activities proved difficult — a problem that was to reappear over the years.



"Versatility the keynote."

For one thing, there was almost a complete absence of jurisdictional directives. Coverage was duplicative between offices, and often parochial. Despite control difficulties, the organization was able to pull in harness when necessary. The disappearance of the Navy collier *Cyclops* is a case in point. In March of 1918, she sailed into the oblivion of the Bermuda Triangle and vanished without a trace. Soon after, a ground swell of rumor arose that her skipper, a Lieutenant Commander Worley, was in fact a German agent. Worse, he had whisked the ship from under the startled noses of naval authorities to use as a merchant raider against the Allies.

The potential for embarrassment was enormous, and ONI pulled out all the stops. In the superheated atmosphere that followed, volleys of investigative leads were fired off

hourly from Washington. Cable lines hummed to virtually every District, Branch and overseas office in the system, as well as Army's MID offices on occasion. As is often the case, less was ultimately learned about what did happen than what did not. Thousands of rumors were run down, and sufficient information pieced together to discount suspicions of Worley's duplicity, but the mystery of the vanished ship remained (and does still) for future generations to unravel. Nonetheless, for an anxious Navy Department, it was one of ONI's finest hours.

The Lean Years

At war's end, ONI was a professionally ordered organization. It had mastered the rudiments of counterintelligence, and was well on the way to extending this experience to a peacetime environment. But the country was in no mood to apply lessons learned. The rush toward retrenchment was sudden and complete, and in the aftermath only scattered remnants were left to carry on the business of intelligence. It had been the war to end all wars, and the push for normalcy was Thermopylae for the Navy's Secret Service.

The period of the twenties were the lean years. By 1921, only seven intelligence officers remained in all of the naval districts. In 1924, an intelligence reserve program was haltingly established, but performance was an uneven patchwork, accomplished by volunteers with neither training nor experience. In the absence of purposeful direction, investigations and counterintelligence drifted on the backwaters of local inattention — a situation that continued well into the thirties.

ONI's mission in 1933 was an uncertain charge to "provide protection against espionage and propaganda — "this last probably reflecting a concern over bolshevism. The nation's attention was turned inward, caught up in a crippling national depression, and beleaguered District Intelligence Officers watched with increasing concern as sparks of conflict threatened to engulf Europe and the Far East.

The time had come to act. Cautious authority was released in 1936 to hire civilian agents in the field. By September of 1937, a total of fourteen had been brought aboard, hired on personal service contracts, by the DIO's.

The beginnings were hesitant, but they marked the first step toward recreating a fully

professional base. Drawn from various walks, these agents received no training whatever, although they were used for every kind of inquiry. Much of their time was spent monitoring possible espionage activities of German and Japanese delegations that crisscrossed the country; rooting with doubtful authority through hotel wastebaskets for "Jap scrap," and engaging in endless surveillances that often began on one coast and ended on the other.

They were frequently tapped for criminal investigations as well, and proved as resourceful as they were unorthodox. On one occasion, a Chicago-based agent was alerted to the homicide of a Navy recruit aboard a crack express bound for Florida. Racing south, he intercepted the train in a small Kentucky town, and proceeded to work while hundreds of bewildered passengers sat out the night on a siding. By dawn, as aroused railroad officials in Pennsylvania were demanding to know just what in hell was going on down there, he had solved the case and driven away with his suspect.

Two events in 1939 accelerated Navy's uncertain steps. One was an Executive memorandum that for the first time assigned direct responsibility to ONI for investigating sabotage, espionage and subversion in the Navy. The second was a limited national emergency declared in September by President Roosevelt. This meant that reservists could be called up to augment the investigative ranks.

Momentum began to build at home as Germany continued its march across Europe. In 1940, the first reservists started reporting to Washington for assignment. The investigations section — to that point only a few officers, an agent and a secretary — was suddenly overflowing its cramped spaces in the Main Navy Building. The leisurely pace changed to one of frantic activity as remedial actions attempted to cover the erosion of past neglect. The first of several delimitation agreements between FBI, ONI and MID was entered into in 1940. Report forms and a case category system were standardized; a training manual produced, and mobilization plans retailored to meet the demand for counterintelligence on a worldwide scale. Through 1941, reservists poured into the districts to set up Zone and Unit intelligence offices, augmented by civilian agents where possible. But, on December seventh, time ran out.

N.I.I.S.

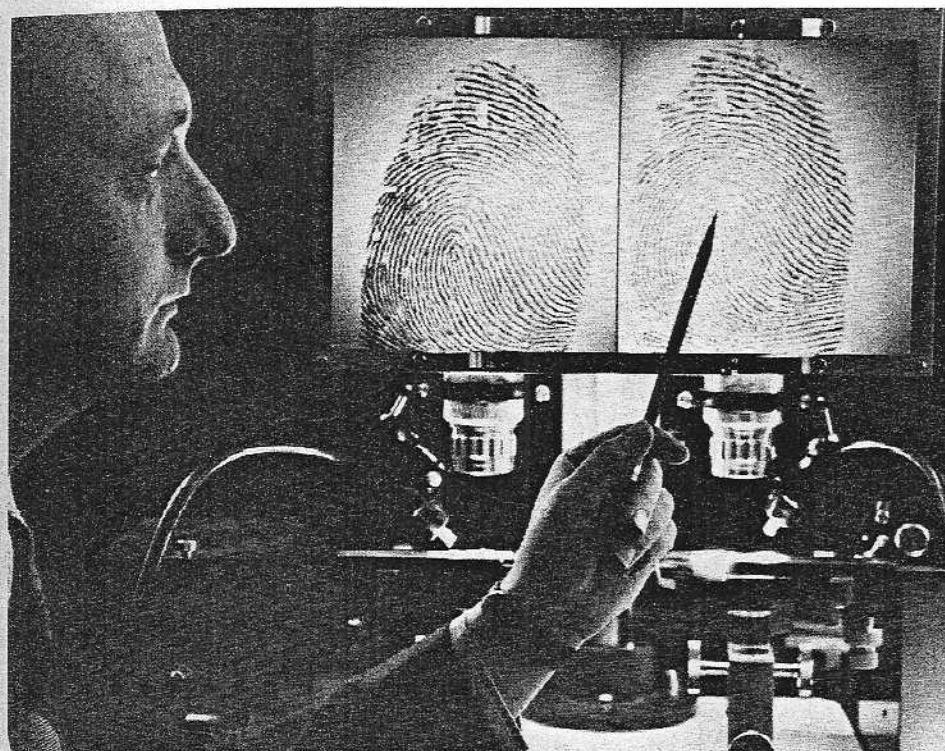
From the outset of the war Washington leadership consisted of the Op-16-B-3 Section, which tried desperately to steer a course through a floodgate of investigative requests that quickly swelled to nearly 100,000 a year. As they fought to keep from being overwhelmed, it became evident once again that in most cases they could do little more than monitor field activities and hope for adherence to the policies set. Commandants tended to view DIO's as part of their independent fiefdoms, and as late as 1942 the Navy's Vice Chief felt obliged to send out a notice that intelligence officers were no longer to be used for finding lost laundry, liquor bottles and the like.

The *laissez-faire* attitude of commands was fostered in part by a lack of specific instruction regarding ONI's authority in investigations and counterintelligence. Faced with the suddenness of wartime demands, policy reflected an aggrandized interpretation of "naval interest," particularly in its domestic operations. Nearly anything that touched on national defense was fair game. Until 1943, for example, primary jurisdiction over Japanese espionage in the United States was exercised by ONI because it was the only organization with an in depth knowledge of Japanese language and culture.

Now known as the Naval Intelligence Investigative Service, its members did a remarkable job in meeting the wide ranging tasks levied on them. What they lacked in experience was made up in enthusiasm. Mistakes were made, most often in trying to extend beyond their capabilities, but in time the investigative corps gained respect and a permanent place in the fabric of Navy security.

As the scales began to tip inexorably against Japan, postwar planning recognized the need to retain a professional base, and provision was made to retain a small group of experienced civilian agents. Two points had emerged clearly: that more specific investigative authority was needed, and that a truly effective organization demanded centralized control as well as direction. The first was remedied in 1945 by Navy Secretary Forrestal, who formally extended ONI's charter to major criminal and security investigations in addition to sabotage and espionage. (A mandate that has undergone many subsequent refinements). The second faced the resistance of tradition and was far more difficult to overcome.

The training and
application
of investigative skills



Postwar Legacy

The nucleus of civilian Special Agents that remained after demobilization were diffused among the naval districts. The tendency among commands was again to view them as local assets, and management control from the Washington level was limited by resources and the generally low priority assigned investigative matters in the postwar period.

A retreat to the insularity of the past may well have been averted by that ubiquitous child of the war years, the personnel security investigation. Loyalty programs, the Korean conflict and the McCarthy era all contributed to increasing requests for background investigations throughout government. Demands were as heavy on Navy as any other service, yet in the fall of 1950, the agent corps numbered only 136. Caseload soon became the most formidable adversary, with currency often measured in years instead of days. Something had to give, and customer exasperation at the long delays finally forced a buildup of ONI's investigative resources.

PSI's were central to Navy's investigative development well into the sixties. Resources committed to the program were nearly the entire basis for training, geographic deployment and management initiatives toward a more centrally directed operation. Cross-servicing of leads among the districts and over-

seas units asserted the commonality of purpose that extended across command lines. Considerable strides were made, but it was not enough. The arrangement of resources and priorities remained under the control of planners outside the operational arena, and despite several organizational reshufflings, the investigations branch continued to fall further and further behind. By 1964, pending cases had grown to 35,000, which translated to a six and a half month backlog per agent.

The change came with devastating suddenness. Following a Defense study on streamlining security procedures among the three components, Secretary McNamara in 1964 directed that "the commander of the Navy Investigative organization be the commander in fact as well as in name, having no primary responsibility other than managing the investigative organization."

It was language that brooked no argument.

The New Concept

The result, of course, was the creation of the Naval Investigative Service.

If the watchword was to streamline, the organization could not have been more cleanly tailored. Under the Director of Naval Intelligence, the new command diagram consisted of only three vertically aligned blocks: the Director, NIS and his headquarters staff; Naval Investigative Service Offices, each

headed by a Commanding Officer, and NIS Resident Agencies, the basic operating components. It was well suited to a worldwide support organization, eliminating as it did the intermediate layering that tends to delay upward reporting and responsiveness to command.

NIS today operates with only two internal departments, Operations and Administration. This reconfiguration did not happen overnight, but evolved as a result of influences both within and without the command. Heavy commitments in Vietnam altered the course of the organization, as did the inception of the Agent Afloat program, which provided a NIS presence on all carriers, deployed or in port. Resource imperatives added urgency to the need for a mobile support team of men for all seasons. Reassignment of the PSI mission and concomitant resources to the Defense Investigative Service in 1972 brought any vestiges of specialization to an end. Investigations and counterintelligence were joined in operational nexus, and training emphasis placed on the ability to operate with equal ease in either discipline.

This linkage underscores a basic philosophy that has evolved from Navy's learning experience over the past century — that given tight central control and sufficient professional upgrading, the two missions can be dis-

charged more efficiently and economically as one. The key has proven to be agent development, in the training and application of skills common to both.

The rebuilding process for NIS is continuing, and if its personnel are less than optimum in numbers to Navy's needs, the new organization is still light years ahead of its predecessors. It is difficult to realize that less than twenty-five years ago, the first civilian Special Agent sent to the Pacific was given a geographic area of eighty million square miles, but such was the case. (It may be noted that in the "One Riot - One Texas Ranger" tradition, he handled the assignment with aplomb). Substantial strides have been made since that time, and will continue.

For the bottom line of NIS is people. And it is on the heritage of their versatility and dedication that Navy is placing its reliance. Though tempered in the crucible of experience, the true test for NIS will be its flexibility to adapt to the winds of change in the years immediately ahead. The verdict remains for the future.



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**The U.S. Army Intelligence Community wishes the Naval Investigative Service a
Happy 10th Anniversary.**



THE PROFESSIONAL READER

SHIPS BENEATH THE SEA: A History of Subs and Submersibles, Robert F. Burgess, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1975. 260 pgs, \$12.50.

SHIPS BENEATH THE SEA tells the exciting story of man's attempts to discover and conquer inner space. The author takes the reader back to the 1300's to learn of the crude conception of what is now one of the worlds most feared and effective weapons. Burgess describes in detail how other configurations of this mighty weapons system is being used to mankind's benefit - such as recovery,

THE PROFESSIONAL READER

exploration and recently the study of the movements of the earth's undersea plates which bears on the movement of continents.

Giving more than just descriptions of the vessels and how they functioned, the author introduces the personalities which were the inventors and designers of these craft. He tells each of their tales of excitement, frustration, defeat and success in a way that makes for a fascinating historical account.

From an intelligence point of view, all that may be gleaned here is a reinforcement of the axiom - as was true for gun-powder - "what is one man's toy is another's weapon."

Marc Faulk