

[redacted] USN

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(b)(3)-50 USC 403
(b)(3)-18 USC 798
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The History of Applesauce

—Which was the nickname for our earliest experiment in civilian operation of an intercept station ([redacted])

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In the immediate post-war era (1945-48), the U.S. Navy's radio intelligence organization shrank from its wartime position of great strength to a mere cadre. It had been decided, of course, that a principal post-war target

[redacted]

operating in various parts of the world. Our collection capability was [redacted] In the Pacific we had small units in [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] our mainstay in the [redacted] area, was [redacted]

[redacted] The station was a great distance from its principal target area [redacted] Most of the targets [redacted] but there was very little operational activity on the part of the [redacted]

[redacted] Everyone complained about this problem daily and we were trying desperately to find a solution.

This was one of the problems presented to Captain Redfield Mason, when he returned to duty with the Naval Security Group in 1947. Captain Mason began discussions with newly established CIA, [redacted] collection. It appeared that we might be able to [redacted]

[redacted] After a year's negotiation, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Captain Mason thought this was worth pursuing and directed me to begin the necessary planning. (My principal job at that time was Intercept and D/F Control Officer for the Naval Security Group; this project was additional.)

We estimated that we would need to establish about [redacted] intercept positions to cover both [redacted]

[redacted] and that we could accomplish this with about [redacted] highly skilled people. We realized that recruiting that many skilled operators would be a formidable task. [redacted]

[redacted] all planning

was to be done by the Navy.

At that time, NSG had within its reserve components an organization known as the Reserve Listening Service (RLS). This consisted of civilians who had served as NSG operators during World War II and who had joined NSG reserve components throughout the U.S. These men performed their Navy drills by copying foreign targets in their homes two hours a week with Navy radio equipment. The intercepted material was mailed to NSS for processing, and certain feedback information was returned to the operators. The RLS was not a smashing success, but it did keep alive the interest of former operators and gave us a minor return on our investment.

The RLS was a natural choice as a recruiting pool.

One day LCDR I. E. Willis, who was in charge of the NSG Reserve program, said he needed a project name to use in correspondence. Several were suggested and one amused Mr. Willis, who remarked that "that one sounds like a lot of applesauce to me." And we had our project name.

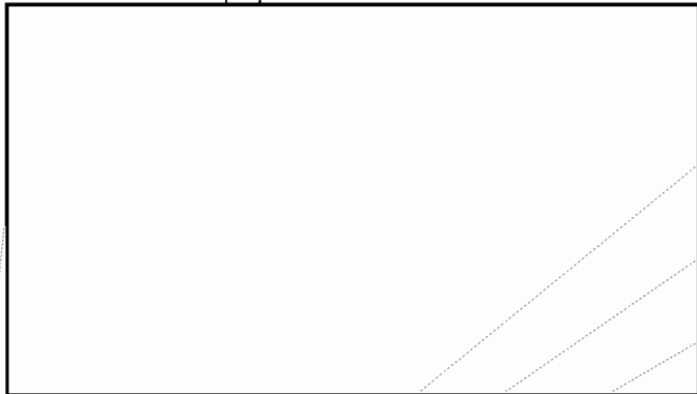
In 1949 the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA) was formed, and the Navy and Army operations were consolidated. The Production organization was moved to

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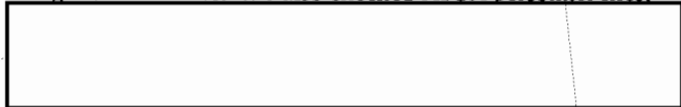
Arlington Hall Station, with Captain Mason as the Chief. He reaffirmed the requirement for the [redacted] station and directed that I step up the effort to establish it.



The formation of AFSA assisted Project Applesauce in some ways because it gave a wider base for planning. John McIntire, who had experience in facilities planning with ASA, designed the [redacted] station, as well as the training facility at Arlington Hall Station that was a near replica of the actual station. [redacted]



In addition to the RLS operators we hoped to hire, we combed the ASA Reserve records for experienced men who might be available. We also checked AFSA personnel files.



There was one difficulty in the operation of intercept stations at that time that we particularly wanted to remedy. The operators were ordinarily cleared only as high as Confidential, which prevented them from knowing about the results of T/A or C/A efforts; thus they received no feedback information and operated in a vacuum. We insisted that all [redacted] of the Project Applesauce crew receive the same Top Secret clearance, and, though we had to fight this one all the way to the top in CIA, we finally won—a victory that, I am sure, ultimately contributed to the success of the station.

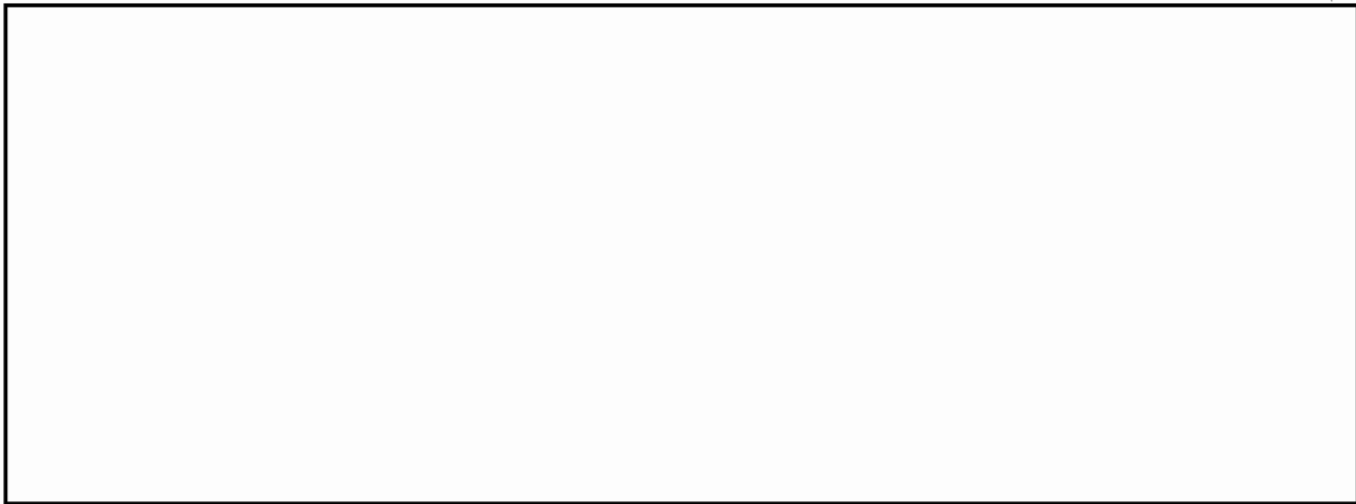
We then embarked on a unique recruiting effort for cryptologic specialists by mailing a letter to approximately 300 men scattered throughout the U.S., asking if they would be interested in civilian employment with a Government Agency (unspecified) at an overseas location (unspecified) at an unspecified salary, doing work similar to that in which they had been engaged during the recent war. [redacted]

[redacted] and I applied the signature. We were highly gratified to receive a large number of replies.

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The entire communications complex, with the wing which housed USF 61 in the lower right.
(U. S. Navy photograph)

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It appeared that we could probably hire an adequate number of people; however, they were scattered all over the U.S. and personal interviews were required. We therefore planned to have our interviewing team, consisting of Major Thorsten Erickson, USA, an AFSA employee, [redacted] of CIA, visit principal cities in each section of the country.

Major Erickson, in mufti, and [redacted] traveled about 10,000 miles in three weeks; they interviewed a large number of applicants and hired most of them. During the interviews, the candidates were not told for whom they would be working, other than the U.S. Government; they were not told where they were going, except that it would be in the [redacted] area; and they were not told exactly what they would be doing. The team carried a large amount of cash and paid some men on the spot for travel and other expenses.

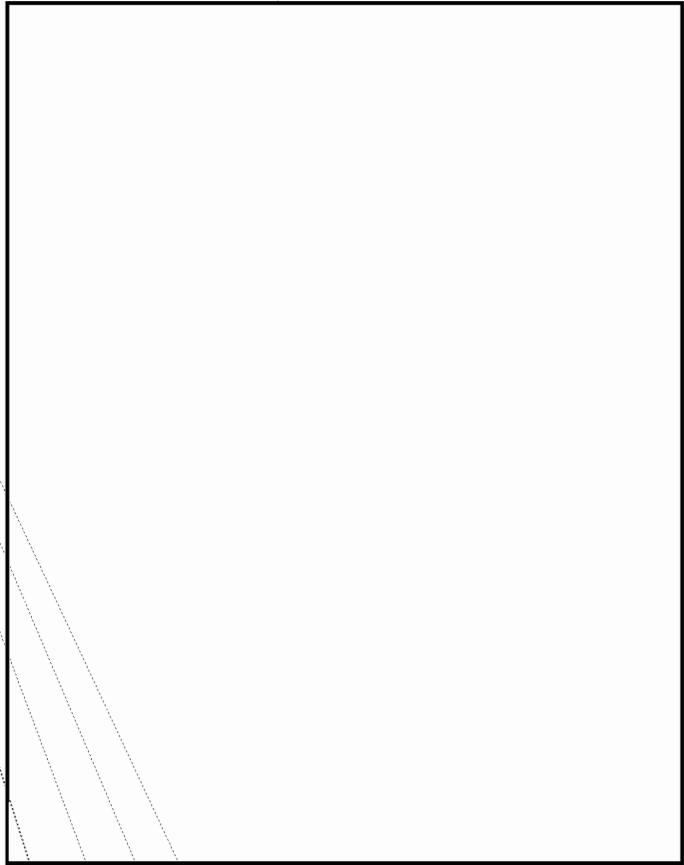
Major Erickson was quite pleased with the men he had been able to hire and said he believed they would make a good crew with a minimum of training. Most of the hiring was done at the GS 5-7 level with an occasional GS-9 as a supervisor.

We also had to find a suitable person to be the civilian in charge and the deputy. This proved to be a monumental undertaking requiring approximately six months. I had several possible candidates; however, for personal reasons, most of them declined, and one was rejected for security reasons. Fortunately we had an ace in the hole in the form of [redacted] USN (Retired) and Chief Radioman [redacted] USN (Retired), highly experienced individuals who very reluctantly agreed to come out of Florida retirement and head the project at salaries of \$10,000 per year—a lot of money in those days.

In the meantime, [redacted] had been working frantically to finish installation of the training facility in A Building, AHS. [redacted]

Finally, all of our new employees were brought to Arlington Hall to be briefed. Fitzpatrick explained to them, for the first time, exactly where they were going and what they would be doing. When [redacted] was mentioned, I watched their faces and concluded that most of them had a general idea of where they were going; however, it was obvious a few of them did not. One man told me he had been sure he was going to [redacted]. At the end of the briefing, we asked if anyone wanted to back out: we were cheered to see not a single hand.

For the next two months the men worked in the training facility: those hired as supervisors established watch lists, and the men copied targets that could be heard in Washington. They also visited the Navy's [redacted] section at Arlington Hall Station for on-the-job training



The operations room [redacted] taken about 3 years after the station was established. The facility originally had [redacted] positions, most of which are shown here.

(Photo classified ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

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and updating of their knowledge. Those hired to man the communications circuits worked in the Arlington Hall Station Communications Center. The men regained their code-copying speed and learned as much as we knew about the [redacted]. They were also briefed on personnel matters, living conditions [redacted] and all of the other things they needed to know about their new job. There was an absolute minimum of complaining, sickness, and absenteeism; we had a gung-ho crew.

In the fall of 1950, the men completed training and [redacted]



Post-Log

The intercept station [redacted] was a success from the beginning. The men proved to be highly motivated operators, and hearability [redacted] was excellent. For the first time, we were able to keep up with the [redacted] problem.

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After a few years, it became difficult to hire replacements and to place the skilled men in jobs once they returned from [redacted] AFSA, NSA, and CIA hired many of the returnees, but it was eventually decided that it would be better to man the station with military operators. Accordingly [redacted] the Navy took over in June 1957, with the facility redesignated USN-16. Thus ended the first U.S. civilian operator experiment.

In retrospect, I wonder why we had so much trouble finding a suitable site for this station. For example, in 1948-49, the U.S. Navy (not NSG) established an Elint site [redacted]. This site was later turned over to NSG and became USN-18. At this same period, the U.S. Army (not ASA) began operating an ELINT site [redacted].

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[redacted] This later became USM-49 under ASA. Why could not these sites also have been used for Comint at that time? As far as [redacted] were concerned, I doubt if they would have ever known the difference—or cared if they did know.

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[redacted] USN, is currently serving as Executive Officer of the National Cryptologic School. As a career cryptologic officer, he has served in Sigint activities in many parts of the world, and as Commanding Officer of five of them. He has had several tours in NSA in jobs involving virtually every cryptologic discipline. He has also contributed to the *NSA Technical Journal*.

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