

Consolidated Training Facility

By Mr. Bengt 'Ben' Monson

Background¹

1. Colin Burke was the featured speaker at the 9 February 2012 WW II History Round Table at Ft. Snelling. He spoke about his book "The Secret in Building 26". During WWII, the Navy built electronic equipment in that Ohio building. These equipments (Bombe units) decrypted the WWII German Enigma codes in conjunction with the British 'Bletchley Park' cryptography work.
2. After WW II, the Navy wanted to keep some of this 'crypto' capability thus encouraged some of the officers² to start a company. The result was the 1946 Engineering Research Associates (ERA) located at 1902 Minnehaha Ave. in St. Paul MN, shown in this circa 1948 photo³.



3. The Round Table Coordinator asked me to make an ERA presentation in support of Colin's presentation. My present was how ERA had been the wellspring of the Computer Industry in Minnesota and specifically how ERA had delivered a computer to the NSA predecessor in 1950.
4. Ben Monson was at a Round Table planning session. After we had chatted about how his reserve Army Security Agency unit had come to use these buildings, he gave me this paper.

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¹ Editing, illustrating, and formatting by Lowell A. Benson.

² CDC founder, „Bill“ Norris, was one of the 4 ERA founders and a Building 26 projects' Navy veteran.

³ Photo scanned from the booklet published by Sperry in commemoration of ERA's 40th anniversary.

The Story

The story of the Consolidated Training Facility (CTF) began after the Annual Training (AT) of the 523rd Army Security Agency (ASA) Company of the Army Reserve in 1976. The then unit commander, Captain John 'Jack' J. Delaney, in planning for the next years training decided that as the unit had cycled through the basic unit training for the fourth or fifth time; it needed some sort of advanced unit training. He felt that in order to retain the excellent personnel, many of whom had prior active duty experience, they needed to go beyond the basic subjects and to do more of those things that the government had initially taught them to do. He and the unit technician, Mr. Bengt 'Ben' Monson, who was also a Warrant Officer in the unit, wrote a letter to Headquarters Army Security Agency, enlisting their help in this matter. HQ ASA summoned Captain Delaney and Mr. Monson to Washington D.C. to discuss their plans. While in Washington, HQ ASA concurred with their plans. However, HQ explained to them that it would also take the approval and support of the National Security Agency (NSA) to get it done. At a follow-on meeting with NSA personnel, it was decided that NSA would send an individual to the next meeting of the unit to ascertain what the level of training was and what additional things needed to be done to allow the plan to proceed. Mr. James Gearhart was present at the next unit assembly. The unit put on a demonstration of moving to the field and setting up and operating its equipment. Mr. Gearhart viewed this and then looked at the facilities possessed by the unit. He returned to NSA and made a report.

Fort Meade summoned Captain Delaney and Mr. Monson for a briefing about Mr. Gearhart's findings. The results were anything but encouraging. NSA provided the unit with a list of a dozen or so things, which the unit had to accomplish before they could do advanced training. That evening in the hotel, Captain Delaney and Mr. Monson put together a rough plan on how to accomplish the things they needed to do to satisfy the NSA. The plan included such things as:

1. having a small cadre of personnel to be indoctrinated full time;
2. having personnel trained as Special Security Officers (SSOs);
3. having personnel trained in the special techniques of search and reporting;
4. getting personnel who were going to be working in the operations indoctrinated; and
5. getting a Special Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) - just to mention a few of the NSA requirements which seemed at that time to be impossible.

Captain Delaney charged Mr. Monson, a full time unit employee, with getting as much accomplished as possible near term. The next day, Captain Delaney and Mr. Monson had a meeting at HQ ASA to establish themselves as having indoctrinated status. {Editor's note: *In some circles indoctrination is being 'read in' on a project.*} HQ ASA agreed to this as it was the first step of a long uphill process.

The next item on the list was the location of a site in which an SCIF could be located. The Ft. Snelling Naval Air Reserve Intelligence unit had a space that they felt could be of used for the advanced training purpose. The ASA unit contacted the 902nd Military Intelligence (MI) Group at Ft. Meade. A plan and concept of operations was developed, NSA sent a special agent to Fort Snelling to inspect the possible site. His analysis was that it would cost more to update the Ft. Snelling site

than it would cost to build an entire new building. However, the agent told the unit that there was a Naval SSO at the UNIVAC plant #2 in St. Paul, suggesting that Mr. Monson contact him to see if he could help. The unit contacted LCDR Charles Alcon, after a brief discussion the two set up an appointment at the Minnehaha Avenue facility in St. Paul.

When they met, LCDR Alcon showed Mr. Monson a basement area in the facility that was not in use at the time. In fact, the Lt. Commander stated that there was a good possibility that he would lose the whole building if a special project wasn't found to occupy the basement. Again, Mr. Monson contacted the Ft. Meade agent who agreed to make another trip to the Twin Cities to review the Minnehaha Avenue facility. The agent agreed that this would be an ideal location for an SCIF and helped draw up the necessary plan for the required alarm system. During this time, the unit operations personnel underwent training to bring their skills up to the standards needed to manage an SCIF. CWOs Arnold, Hjulberg, and Monson attended the Special Security Officer Orientation course at FORSCOM – therefore becoming the first Reserve Officer SSOs. These officers prepared a plan and a concept of operations that they then forwarded through channels to FORSCOM, along with a request for the funds to provide for the necessary Navy building basement modifications.

Just before Christmas 1977, Mr. Monson received a telephone call from Col. J. Barry Williams at the FORSCOM G-2 office. He wanted to know 'who we thought we were', asking for \$17,145.00! Mr. Monson calmly replied: "All we did was to follow FORSCOM Reg. 350-2." Col. Williams then asked: "What fool signed that regulation?" Without taking a breath, Ben answered: "You did, Sir!" The Col. then said, "well, I guess you've got it." As the building modifications were almost complete, Mr. Monson contacted the NSA to inform them that their requested actions were complete. He also asked when would the prerequisite equipment and documents would be available. In the spring of 1978, the SCIF was accredited and equipment installed. ASA operators could now receive some special training by visiting instructors from Goodfellow Air Force Base, a training facility.

Everything was running smoothly, the operators were doing a super job, and everybody was happy. Then one day LDCR Alcon, the Navy SSO, called Mr. Monson requesting an urgent meeting. The following day, the LDCR told Mr. Monson that Sperry UNIVAC was getting out of the business areas that required Navy presence at the Minnehaha Avenue facility. The Navy would be vacating the adjacent Building 6 SCIF. When asked if the Army would be interested in moving over into the SCIF, Mr. Monson checked with higher headquarters and no objections were raised; thus the move was made. From a 700 sq. ft. basement, the ASA unit now had 3,500 sq. ft. available to them. It was obvious that this additional space far exceeded the space needed by one unit. Mr. Monson contacted the Fifth Army and FORSCOM suggesting that they look into using the facility for special training of other units – the space and personnel were now available.

The Fifth Army and FORSCOM agreed to hold a meeting with all concerned parties. On September 10/11, 1981 the parties met, Dr. Dempsey of FORSCOM recorded the following notes:

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS WHICH CREATED THE CTF***USAR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE TRAINING***

1. Term used to describe TNG Facility will be CONSOLIDATED TRAINING FACILITY (CTF).
2. Purpose of the CTF: To provide/ensure technical skills competence of intel soldiers. [the CTF will not award or certify Military Occupation Specialties (MOS).] Be consistent with BTMS objectives & the Soldier's Manual.
3. Implementation:
 - a. Austin CTF:
 - Staffed by ARMR VII and available MTTs for Training Year (TY) 82
 - Will utilize MUTA-5; 9 months, 2 weekends per month.
 - Intel Training (TNG) Program:
 - Know your enemy
 - USA Division
 - Tech skills instruction
 - Operational experience, live &/or taped mission
 - Production is a TNG objective
 - Mission will be linked to CAPSTONE whenever possible
 - S-2 TNG
 - b. Snelling CTF:
 - Staffed by 178 day Reserve Active Duty tours for TY82
 - Intel TNG Program:
 - Tech Skills instruction
 - Operational experience, live &/or taped
 - Production is a TNG objective
 - Collection/analysis mission will be linked to CAPSTONE when possible.
4. Funding:
 - a. Existing Channels will be utilized.
 - b. Travel/per diem will be based on an approved 1610 submitted by unit Cdr.
 - c. SCIF is owned & serviced by 88th ARCOM (Snelling), or 90th ARCO (Austin).
 - d. ARMR VII funds TY82 staff travel/per diem for Austin CTF, except where other arrangements are made. 88th ARCOM funds TY82 staff travel, etc. for Snelling CTF.
 - e. Operation of the CTF must not exceed resources programmed for TY82, unless FORSCOM obtains supplemental funding.
 - f. FORSCOM will seek additional funding for TY 82 based on requirements identified by 88th & 90th ARCOMs.
5. Training Missions, Training Programs:
 - a. Each CTF will conduct TNG based on TNG plans already established adhering as much as possible to following guidelines:
 - Technical intelligence skills competence is the overriding concern.
 - Intelligence production is a major TNG objective.
 - Live or taped collection missions will be assigned/approved by FORSCOM.
 - Operational experience is a fundamental methodology.

- Analytic projects may be undertaken for 96B/96D/98 CMF as a training/production mission.
 - A link between CAPSTONE & intelligence mission will be maintained whenever possible.
 - b. Beginning TY 83, CTF training programs will adhere to FORSCOM guidelines.
6. Equipment:
- a. Fifth Army will consolidate and forward equipment requirements essential to conduct the CTF mission at Austin and Snelling, NLT 1 Oct. 81, broken down as follows:
 - TY 82
 - TY 83
 - TY 84
 - b. FORSCOM will seek authorization to enable ARCOMs to purchase commercial equipment to satisfy training requirements when TOE gear is not available for CTF use.
 - c. FORSCOM will attempt to secure surplus or other equipment needed to support the TNG mission of the CTF.
 - d. FORSCOM will provide lists of recommended equipment to ARCOMs for possible purchase to support intelligence TNG requirements.
7. Cadre:
- a. FORSCOM will structure a TDA for permanent cadre to operate the CTF. This will be done in coordination with 5 A, ARMR, & ARCOMs.
 - b. FORSCOM will attempt to establish a permanent CTF staff & TNG cadre by FY83, and ensure appropriate funding thru established channels.
 - c. FORSCOM will have final approval on hire/fire/appointment actions affecting permanent cadre for the CTF.
 - d. The CTF will be headed by an active duty military chief; whose rater will be determined upon TDA approval. [AROMS's position is that the rater of the CTF chief must be lowest CDR. Above any possible conflict of interest.]
 - e. Recommended Cadre Structure: [Alternative staffing is a 178-day tour.]
 - *Chief [Active Component]
 - *Operations/Training director [GS]
 - **Tactical Intel Sec Chief [AC 35/36]
 - *OB Instructor [GS]
 - *Interrogator Instructor [GS]x2
 - Imagery Inst [962A/96I]
 - **EW/SIGINT [05G]
 - *Morse/Non-Morse [GS]
 - *Voice [GS]x2 [Two Languages]
 - *ELINT [GS]
 - *Traffic Analyst [GS]
 - *Maintenance Tech.
 - *SSO [AD]
 - *Supply [GS]
 - *Admin [GS]
 - *Admin Clerk [GS]

➤ Assist SSO [GS]

* = Minimum essential; only 1 Interrogator & 1 Voice Interceptor

** = Possibly Tour of Duty Assignment (TDA) positions when RC CEWI is implemented - would be dual role of working supervisor & intensive management cell functions.

Total minimum Austin: 3 AC, 1 AD, 12 GS

Total minimum Snelling: 1 AC, 1 AD, 12 GS

8. General:

- A. The CTF is a training service TDA organization; it is not a mobilization asset.
- B. CTF aims to:
 - a. Offer tech skills training not otherwise available.
 - b. Offer meaningful training as a retention incentive.
 - c. Stimulate recruitment of prior service and qualified personnel for intel units [USAR].
 - d. Offer training across CMD boundaries to RC and AC personnel.
- C. FORSCOM will direct that unit CDRs desiring to utilize the CTF for technical skills TNG of their intelligence soldiers commit such personnel to the CTF training program on a regular basis as part of the annual training program of the unit. Failure to do so would seriously degrade the TNG provided and the ability of the CTF to sustain the collection / production mission that is the core of the training methodology & program.
- D. In general, the CTF will take on no more than resources and manpower make possible to provide the most effective tng. Any expansion will advance in step with resources. The idea is to start out small and grow into full service.

{Editor's note: 40 military and government people participated in this formative meeting, not listed herein for privacy reasons.}

The Rest of the Story

One of the first tasks for the CTFs was to develop a test for each MOS which would allow them to determine what level an individual was in his/her MOS. They could then decide on which instructions would be given to bring the individual up to standard. This test was developed with the cooperation of the testing branch of Fort Devens, who were the proponent of the MOS tests for the 908 CMF. The instructors at the CTFs were given all the past MOS tests and from that developed the test to be given to their respective students.

Once the tests were completed, they were sent back to Ft. Devens for their concurrence and publication. An example of how the test worked is best given by a Strategic Military intelligence Detachment (Strat MID.) This unit consisted of nine individuals, [4 officer and 5 enlisted]. The unit had requested testing and training. The test was given to the enlisted personnel on a Saturday morning, corrected the same day. The instructors reviewed the test and found that the major item that all were lacking was map reading. On Sunday, the enlisted men received instruction curricula based on the test. After the morning break, the executive officer of the unit came to me with a

complaint that his enlisted personnel were not receiving the training they thought they should. I called a meeting of the unit commander, the executive officer, and the instructor. I asked the instructor to bring the results of the previous day's tests. After reviewing the test and the projected course of study, the commander agreed that the course material was appropriate; in fact, he was surprised that the individuals had found their way to the CTF. The class resumed and there were no further incidents. Overall, the cooperation of the unit commanders serviced by CTF Snelling was outstanding. They saw the CTF as a tool for them to use and not as a threat to their command prerogative.

CTF Snelling soon recognized that while it could test the individual and from that test fashion a training program that would improve job performance. That was only half of the pie. A further step was necessary! A test of the unit had to be developed so that a commander would know whether his unit could work together and if not; where were the weak links. To do this, the members of the Snelling CTF constructed a war game. It consisted of a division front and its opposing Soviet forces. The game was constructed in both language and Morse to include ELINT and POW. All language and Morse was placed on tape, all documents were prepared. The tapes were played through the tape recorders into signal generators which were hard wired to the intercept positions. The signal generators gave the CTF the ability to change frequencies. Everything was time sequenced and scripted. The only thing the unit had to do was show up with their equipment, to make this easy, the CTF obtained, with the help of the 5th Army Intelligence Office, a surplus motor home from NASA which enabled the CTF to go to the unit. In fact, the CTF located in St. Paul MN went to Fort Riley KS, Fort Lewis WA, and Fort Ripley MN to conduct the tests. The only requirement was that the unit commander had to decide the time duration that he required from the time of intercept to the time of delivery of the information to the supported commander. The unit test was graded on a plus or minus of the times he had selected. When the test was complete, the unit commander received the results and nobody else. He alone made the decision whether or not he had passed. The unit test duration was over a 24-hour period. The individuals who participated in the test really enjoyed it. The main comment from prior service individuals was that they had never heard so much traffic before. They indicated that on the active duty positions they had sat on, only had had a couple of messages per hour. One of the goals the CTF had given itself was to have at least a message every five minutes.

Other services: the Naval Security Group Command and the Air Force Reserve used the CTF for their projects, i.e. the Navy with RIVERBOAT and the Air Force with some imagery training. All the services shared space, intelligence, and equipment. One could say that this was also the first 'all source' center.

The CTF was certainly not the only way to train but was the first of many steps along the way. I think that it made the Army take notice of the fact that they had not, up until this time, provided any meaningful training to their Reserve intelligence forces. The MI branch owes a debt of gratitude to the men and women of both CTF Austin and CTF Snelling as well as to the men and women at higher Headquarters who made it happen. *Ben Monsen*

Epilogue

Why was there a Navy Special Security Officer (SSO) on this quiet street in St. Paul? Because a variety of ERA/UNIVAC/Sperry government contracts were classified; for example, the first stored program computer [ATLAS] delivered to the NSA predecessor in 1950 was classified for 17 years.

An aerial view⁴ of the plant; the Navy had their offices in the small building on the right center – this is the basement location first used by the ASA. At the bottom center by the parking lot is the one story ‘Building 6’ that the Navy had vacated; facilitating the ASA training mission expansion. There was a double fence between the parking lot and the building in the early 80s. I remember taking a ‘polygraph’ test in that building as part of receiving a ‘need to know’ security clearance for a special project. The larger building diagonally across the picture is the factory where Northwestern Aeronautical Corporation built WWII gliders.



ERA memories faded away over the last six decades as corporate mergers and divestitures occurred. The ‘Building Six’ area and parking lot on Minnehaha Avenue now [2014] has a large warehouse. The original Navy building and basement houses a charity organization.



The VIP CLUB was created in 1980 as the Sperry Retirees Club - a non-profit, social and service organization. Today, we are over 1,000 retirees and former employees from UNISYS, Lockheed Martin MS2 and their Twin Cities ‘heritage’ companies as illustrated in this *IT Legacy* icon. In 2005, Lockheed Martin in conjunction with the retirees club started a Legacy Committee with co-chairs Richard ‘Ole’ Olson [LMCO] and Lowell Benson [VIP Club]. It was through this committee that Lowell was contacted to participate in the Round Table at Ft. Snelling.

The editor is a retired Engineering Manager, UNIVAC 1960 to UNISYS 1994. Before joining UNIVAC, he served as a Russian Linguist [MOS 982.1663] for an Army Security Agency unit in Germany. While at Univac in the early 60s, he also served in an Army Reserve Military Intelligence Detachment at Ft. Snelling.

<http://vipclubmn.org/documents.html#Articles> has other stories about our IT Legacy.

Lowell A. Benson; BEE 1966, U of MN

⁴ Photo from the archives of the Charles Babbage Institute at University of Minnesota.