

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Lieut. S. H. Simpson Jr.

July 16, 1942

Major L. W. Lowman

Summary of my trip to New York from Monday, July 13, to Thursday, July 16.

I. LIBERIAN EXPEDITION

Tuesday morning there was a meeting in Mr. John McDonough's office in which Mr. Ruyard Boulton, Mr. Shapiro's ~~assistant~~ on the African Desk, Mr. A. D. Hutchinson, head of the African Information Service, and Mr. Otis Trowbridge, who will head the Liberian Expedition from the communications angle.

It was discovered that very little progress had been made in pushing the expedition since they were depending on Colonel Gromback for information, material and certain decisions.

The equipment at Bellmore turned out to be very meager, as follows:

- 1 receivers
- 1 speaker
- 1 gas electric generator
- 500 feet of ~~power~~ wire and 1000 feet of antennae wire
- 2 direction finding units (not satisfactory)
- 2 noise measuring and field strength ~~ing~~ ~~units~~ *units*

This equipment will have to be supplemented from Mr. Horn's stock and certain parts bought on the open market.

I checked over and selected 7 men which were available for this expedition and had McDonough give them passport applications and secrecy warrants to sign.

There is a secret report by Lieut. Commander Ravenal, of S. I., indicating that Fire tone is a very undesirable location due to the lax organization, certain German personnel, and lack of control by our Government.

The Pan-American situation was gone over more thoroughly and seems to be the exact place for us to set up our first activities. Pan-American has already at this station certain transmitters, receivers and direction finders, with the intentions of expanding

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 09-Jun-2009

the personnel to cover some 6 point-to-point circuits. Ferry command planes and transient personnel are arriving at this station every day, and it would be quite easy for a number of men to arrive here unnoticed. Furthermore, Pan-American is very shy of technical and operating personnel at the present, and it might be possible to arrange with them for our men to operate in their stations as a part of their job for a week or so until our equipment arrived and until they became acquainted with the situation and surroundings.

The most important point here is that Pan-American has power, housing facilities and direction finders, which are almost unobtainable at the present time. This can probably be arranged with Mr. Luberitz, Chief Engineer of Pan-American, who I know personally, after authorization is obtained from Mr. Bixby, Vice President in charge of operations with P. A. A.

II. VISIT TO LATSON'S OFFICE

The whole N. B. C. organization seems to have been loosely organized. The technical details were handled through N. B. C. by Colonel Cromback while other construction and purchases were handled directly through Mr. Latson and Mrs. Minck, and no one was able to coordinate the whole activity.

Mr. Latson advises that he has stopped the construction on the Hollywood Plant and that that was perfectly agreeable to the Austin Company, since it was a "cost-plus" agreement.

No water, lights, or power has been installed and the Los Angeles Power and Light Company has been instructed to delay work until further notice.

I okayed approximately \$2840.00 outstanding bills and material in the present of Colonel Cromback, which was agreeable to Mr. Latson. This was actually money already spent by N. B. C. against the money in escro.

Explained the situation to Mr. Latson and after going over the progress report with him--about which he knows very little--we agreed that it would be almost impossible to halt work at Bellmore.

III. BELLMORE

This station is nearing completion and the only sensible thing to do is to complete it and make use of it jointly with some of the other organizations.

After study of the maps and plans and consulting with Seller, McElrath, of N. B. C., and Mr. Latson, I can state that this station was not expected to be used for long distance point-to-point communication. By moving certain antennae, it might be possible to get two fairly decent 2-set diversity circuits directed to London and Central Africa.

Colonel Gromback had left word for Miss Latimer and Sellers to make a complete inventory from purchase slips which he was to sign in accordance of the station and its equipment. Such an inventory would mean absolutely nothing since a good percentage of the material was expendable or to be a part of specific units and I have asked for an inventory of equipment units and material on hand.

Colonel Gromback seems to have severed his relations completely with the organization but expects to return this weekend, and has requested Miss Latimer to remove all the maps in his office which he claims belong to him.

IV. ACTIVITIES AT BELLMORE

I spent quite some time in talking with Mr. Candella, explaining to him that the organization should continue as before and that we had hoped instead of wrecking it, to improve it. Mr. Candella became quite friendly and stated that he had advised Colonel Gromback in the beginning that his activities in isolated Bellmore would be almost useless from a crypto-analysis standpoint because of the lack of liaison with other information centers and sources of material. He agrees that the only sensible thing to do would be to combine all or several such organizations to eliminate competition and guarantee complete material on each subject.

Mr. Jules Van Item is in charge of the translation and editorial department, which includes three other people, and I am attaching hereto a report of the languages and activities he covers. I was unable to see Mr. Van Item.

Mrs. Wilson is in charge of the Japanese phase of the work under Mr. Candella, presently situated in the proposed laboratory. She is one of the 6 people who worked under Yardley in the last war and succeeded in breaking several of the Japanese codes. She is a student of Kanji and Romaji, but states that the lack of material and personnel has limited her considerably. Colonel Gromback has ordered through N. B. C. 4 Romaji typewriters to be specially built by Underwood, Elliott, Fisher, for Mrs. Wilson's department. Since

typewriters are on the block list, these require special authorization from some Government Department in charge.

Mr. James F. J. Maher is in charge of the department of Radio Intelligence, assisted by Mrs. Gromback, who is operating under the name of Margaret Kaerney. This is the only division from which I received very little cooperation, as far as learning what the activity was and what was intended. My personal feelings are, from looking at the material at hand, that nothing has been accomplished, and they are not very familiar with what is intended. They have very few of the sources of information necessary for making up a radio intelligence and frequency list which are obtainable. Neither are they in contact with the commercial companies and Government Agencies supplying this information.

V. NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

The engineering and technical construction and purchasing for F. B. C., Inc. at both Bellmore and Hollywood has been done through the National Broadcasting Company. Originally \$150,000.00 was placed in escrow with N. B. C. to be expended solely on the authorization of Colonel Gromback. Up to my entrance in the picture \$103,000.00 has been spent, and I authorized some \$2840.00 outstanding, mainly because it was such things as salaries, labor and material on hand or ordered. I talked to both Mr. McElreth, the chief operating engineer of N. B. C., who has been handling the deal with Colonel Gromback, and Mr. Ladner, of N. B. C.'s legal staff, who arranged all the details with Mr. Latson. N. B. C. has a letter authorizing only Colonel Gromback to expend this money and a letter from Colonel Gromback saying he is no longer connected with the organization and some \$2840.00 worth of bills which have been authorized by one Lieut. Simpson, and they are hoping they get their money. It was suggested that Mr. Ladner draft a letter for Mr. Latson and Colonel Goodfellow's signature, authorizing Major Lowman and/or Lieut. Simpson to act for the F. B. C. Company, as far as the N. B. C. account is concerned.

The direction finders purchased from R. C. A. Manufacturing Company have proved completely unsatisfactory, and I have taken the liberty, in more or less desperation, of authorizing ~~Statsenberger~~, *Stelzenberger*, one of the N. B. C. technicians at Bellmore, to drive the three equipments (one is in Hollywood) to R. C. A. Manufacturing to show them in detail what is wrong and return for the equipment and test it in R. C. A.'s laboratories upon the completion of servicing. Mr. Duttera, of N. B. C.'s engineering staff, is handling the engineering details and knows the specifications we require.

Mr. Resides, of N. B. C., in charge of the engineering design, Bellmore and Hollywood, has been instructed by me to try to locate an experimental model of a high-frequency direction finder, at one time ~~Bellmore~~ and used by N. B. C.

N. B. C. is delaying the engineering design work on the Hollywood plant until we advise them to proceed.

VI. GENERAL

I introduced Lieut. Graveson to Mr. McDonough, who has been passing on all the expedition personnel, and he votes for him 100%. Lieut. Graveson is prepared to go to work immediately upon the receipt of his orders, and I believe, can supply himself with somewhat of a staff.

Colonel Gronback refused to turn over to me the so-called secret submarine information, and before final equipment plans are completed for the Liberian Expedition, this information will have to be obtained from D. I. S. and our O. N. I.

If we can push negotiations with Pan-American and Messrs. Shapiro and Boulton in obtaining diplomatic clearance for the expedition personnel, I believe we can get the Liberian Expedition started in not more than 30 days.

I was unable to see either Mr. Winnebotten or Mr. Pratt but learned from Major Mitchell that the Signal Corps signed a contract last night with R. C. A. Communications Inc. for their transmitting and receiving stations in New Orleans, Los Angeles, Seattle and Chicago. This means we lose the Los Angeles station, which was equipped with two complete sets of diversity receivers and two transmitters.

III. BELLMORE***

I have instructed Sellers at Bellmore to begin exploring the possibilities of converting some of his present receivers to a more or less hybrid type of reception at Bellmore.

*** Addition

J. W. K.

*Army building monitoring stations 75° across in Virginia
Army, gas Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles & New Orleans stations of RCA*