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Description of document: The Cobra Judy Acquisition (U) - NSA Cryptologic Quarterly article (Vol.1, No.4, Winter 1983)

Requested date: 26-September-2006

Released date: 22-February-2012

Posted date: 02-April-2012

Source of document: National Security Agency
Attn: FOIA/PA Office (DJP4)
9800 Savage Road, Suite 6248
Ft. George G. Meade, MD 20755-6248
Fax: 443-479-3612 (attention of the FOIA/PA Office)
[Online FOIA Request Form](#)

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NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

FOIA Case: 51516A
22 February 2012

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of 26 September 2006 for the following NSA Cryptologic Quarterly article: "The Cobra Judy Acquisition (U). (author deleted), Vol.1, No.4, Winter 1983, NSA Cryptologic Quarterly." A copy of your request is enclosed. Your request has been processed under the FOIA, and the document you requested is enclosed. Certain information, however, has been deleted from the enclosure.

This Agency is authorized by statute to protect certain information concerning its activities, as well as the names of its employees. Such information is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA which provides for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by statute. The specific statute applicable in this case is Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 402 note). We have determined that such information exists in this record, and we have excised it accordingly.

In addition, personal information regarding an individual has been deleted from the enclosure in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6). This exemption protects from disclosure information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. In balancing the public interest for the information you request against the privacy interests involved, we have determined that the privacy interests sufficiently satisfy the requirements for the application of the (b)(6) exemption.

The Initial Denial Authority for NSA information is the Deputy Associate Director for Policy and Records, D. M. Janosek. Since these deletions may be construed as a partial denial of your request, you are hereby advised of this Agency's appeal procedures. Any person denied access to information may file an appeal to the NSA/CSS Freedom of Information Act Appeal Authority. The appeal must be postmarked no later than 60 calendar days from the date of the initial denial letter. The appeal shall be in writing addressed to the NSA/CSS

FOIA Appeal Authority (DJP4), National Security Agency, 9800 Savage Road STE 6248, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6248. The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularity, the grounds upon which the requester believes release of the information is required. The NSA/CSS Appeal Authority will endeavor to respond to the appeal within 20 working days after receipt, absent any unusual circumstances.

The Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) has asked that we protect information pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(1), national security information. Authority for continuing classification beyond 25 years is defined in EO 13526, Section 3.3, and is adequately supported in the appropriate AFTAC security classification guidance. Those deletions have been marked with the code OGA (Other Government Agency).

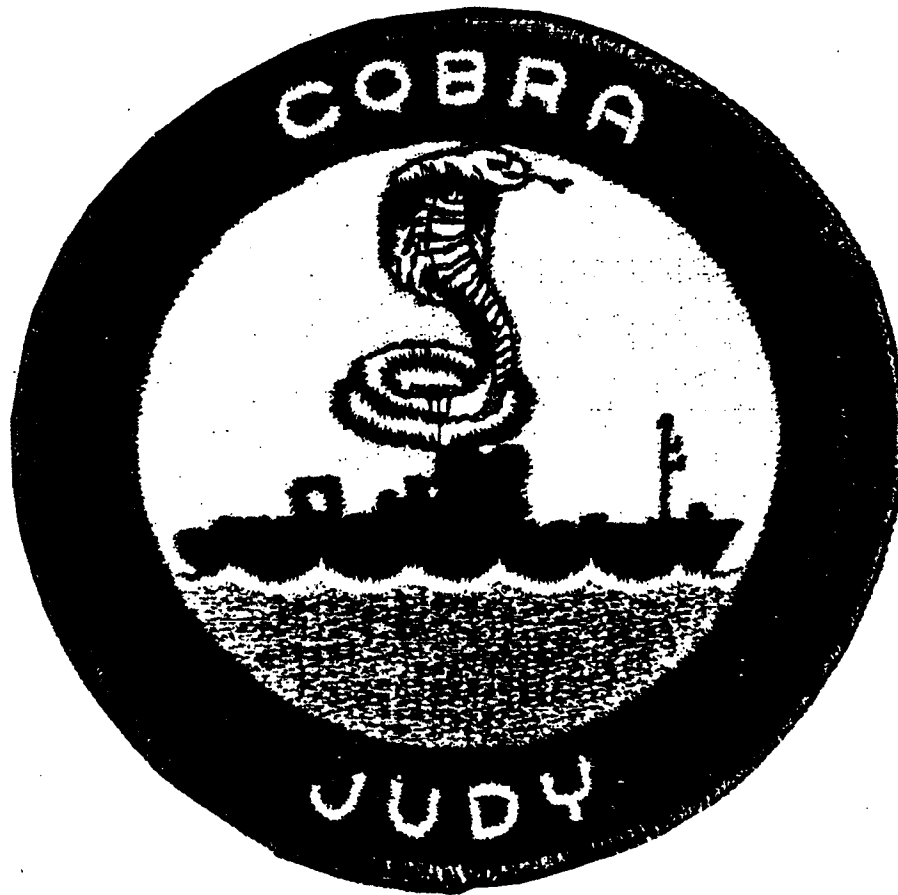
Any appeal of the denial of AFTAC information should be directed to that agency. The Commander, AFTAC, is the original classification authority and the initial denial authority for AFTAC's equities requested under the FOIA. The requester has the right to appeal his nondisclosure decision. The Secretary of the Air Force requires the requester to submit his appeal notice within 60 days of the final determination letter. The requester is asked to include in his appeal letter reasons for reconsideration, attach a copy of this response letter, and reference AFTAC's case number 2007-0024-C. Submit the appeal online at the Air Force Public Access Link, <https://www.efoia.af.mil/palMain.aspx>, or address the appeal letter to: Secretary of the Air Force, THRU: AFTAC/SOF (FOIA), 1030 S. Highway A1A, Patrick AFB FL 32925-3002.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela N. Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

PAMELA N. PHILLIPS
Chief
FOIA/PA Office

Encls:
a/s



The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official opinion of NSA/CSS.

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Approved for Release by NSA on
02-01-2012, FOIA Case # 51516

The *Cobra Judy* Acquisition (U)

[Redacted]

(S) In 1973 the Department of Defense recommended the development of a modern multi-sensor collection system to monitor Soviet strategic missile testing. On 10 June 1981, after several years of study and four years of construction, the United States Air Force dedicated that system—the *Cobra Judy* ship.

[Redacted] This account, [Redacted] supports a number of important "Rules of Engineering."

(S) [Redacted]

The system, named *Cobra Judy*, would operate near the Kamchatka Peninsula and

[Redacted]

Gerald Ford was President, Lew Allen was Director

(S) The Air Force Electronic Systems Division (ESD) was given program management responsibility for the *Cobra Judy* effort and the U.S.S. *Observation Island* was selected as the ship to be used. The ship had been in "wet storage" in Oakland for several years and required major overhaul

[Redacted]

During a major acquisition strategy meeting dealing with the overhauling problem, there was a general agreement that Terman's Law of Innovation should guide the overhaul:

If you want a track team to win the high jump, you find one person who can jump seven feet, not seven people who can jump one foot.

So, the Air Force went out and started talking to major U.S. shipyards and came to grips with the task ahead.

[Redacted]

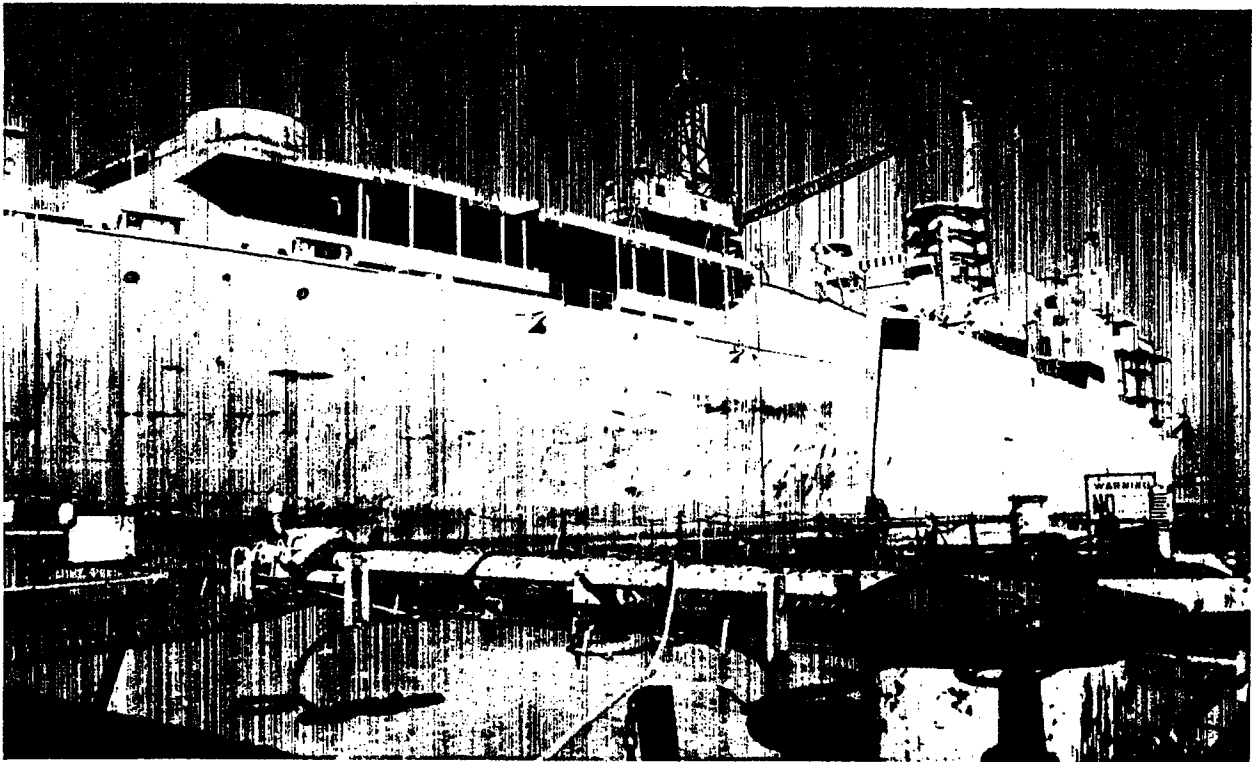
(S) While the Air Force was negotiating with shipyards regarding overhaul,

[Redacted]

(b) (1)
OGA

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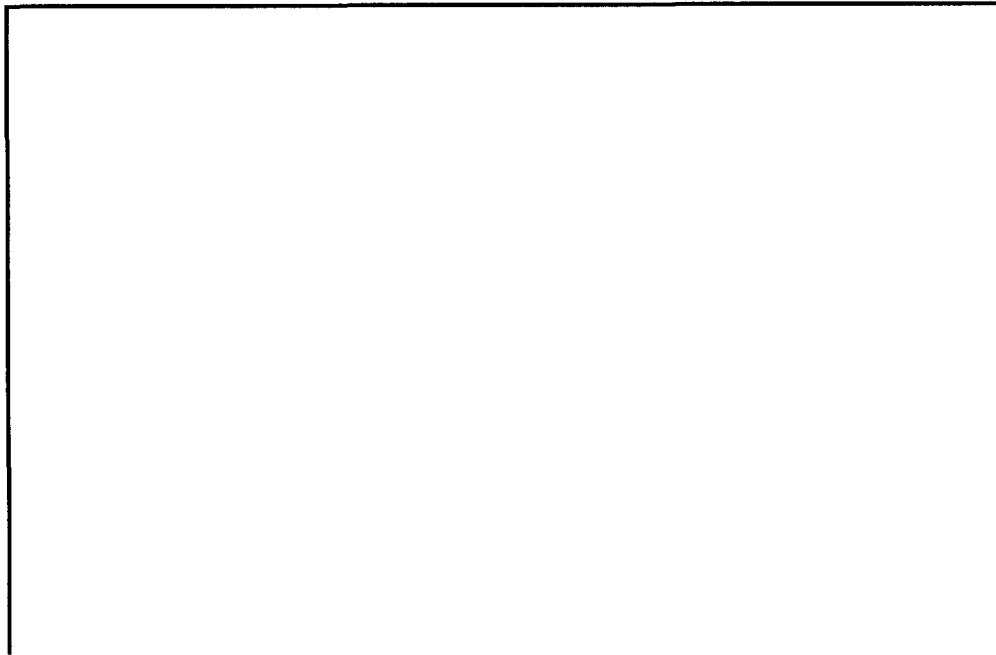
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Before: The U.S.S. *Observation Island* during overhaul.



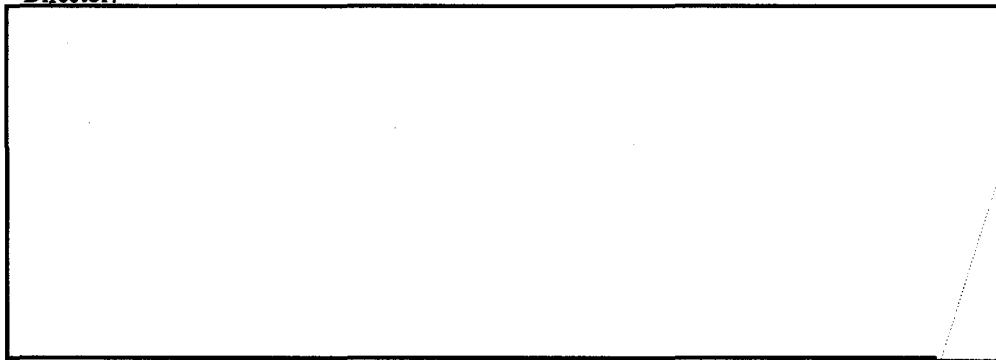
~~(S)~~ ~~(U)~~ Rather than add more money to the program (which probably was not reasonable),



This milestone was achieved in large part by following Boyle's First Law:

The success of any venture will be helped by prayer, even in the wrong denomination.

Cobra Judy was back on track. Jimmy Carter was now President and Bobby Inman was Director.



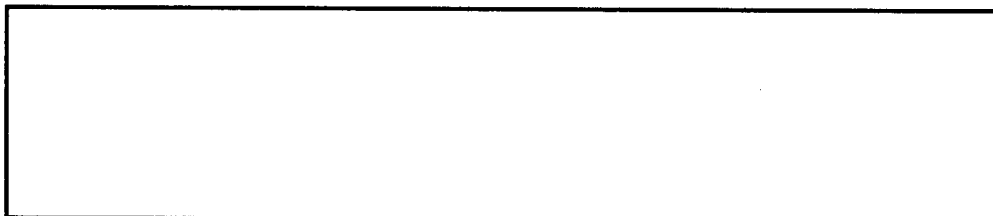
This estimate proved to discredit Suhor's Law:

A little ambiguity never hurt anyone.

(b) (1)
OGA

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CRYPTOLOGIC QUARTERLY



(U) Calmer minds eventually prevailed, and sufficient funds were restored in the following program years—confirming Zymurgy's First Law of Evolving System Dynamics:

Once you open a can of worms, the only way to re-can them is to use a larger can.



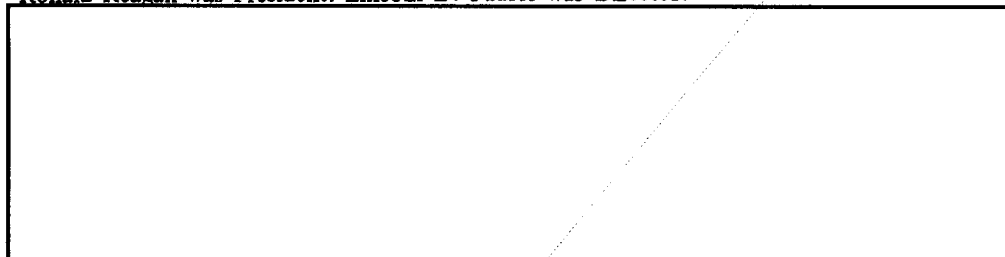
(b) (1)
QGA

(U) The list of unique and interesting situations encountered during the 22-month Baltimore shipyard period was endless. A Russian cargo ship with a dead whale impaled on her bow was docked alongside *Cobra Judy*. Six hundred tons of concrete ballast were dynamited from the decks of *Cobra Judy*. A four-hundred-ton floating crane was required to install the phased array radar assembly aboard. Twelve thousand radar elements were hand-wired. The Baltimore harbor was closed to navigation during critical installation work.

(U) When *Cobra Judy* departed in May 1981 for her final installation/testing in Boston, she was a proud lady and only six weeks behind schedule. Clarke's Law was verified:

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

Ronald Reagan was President. Lincoln D. Faurer was Director.

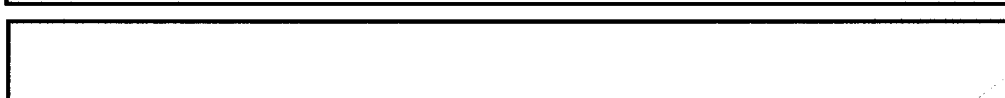


~~(S)~~ The initial test cruise for *Cobra Judy* is scheduled for late 1981.



~~(S)~~ The prognosis is good.

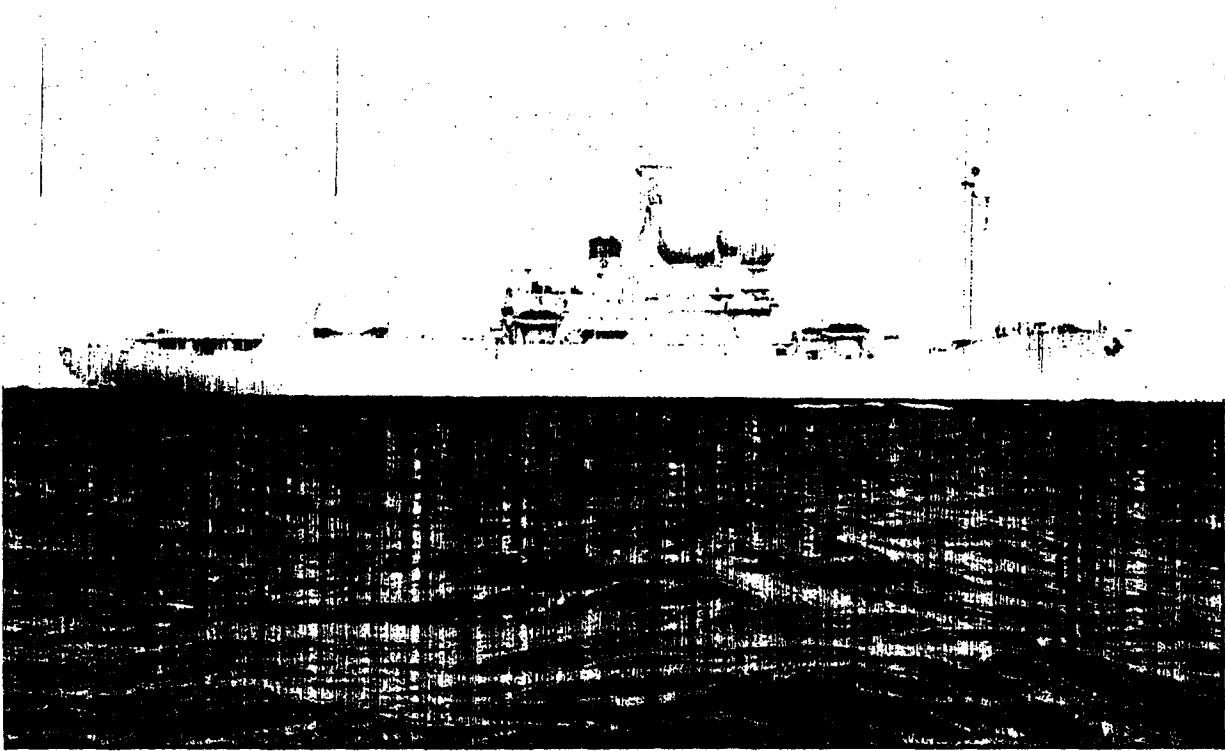
The wait has been a long one and the investment has been significant.



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After: The *Cobra Judy* sails the Baltimore Harbor.

COBRA JUDY ACQUISITION

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CRYPTOLOGIC QUARTERLY

and should take great pride in the results. Any contributions made to the effort by the author can be attributed to Boyle's Third Law:

Talent in staff work will recurringly be interpreted as managerial ability.

EPILOGUE

(S) *Cobra Judy* departed from Baltimore in May 1981 and sailed to Boston, Massachusetts, for "near dockside" testing. This testing took place through December and included short cruises away from the port of Boston to turn on the radar. [redacted]

(S) In December, *Cobra Judy* sailed to the Pacific to begin her Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) phase. [redacted]

[redacted] The IOT&E phase was completed in July 1982 when *Cobra Judy* was declared operational. The first operational cruise occurred in August 1982.

(S) During *Cobra Judy's* test and operational phases in 1982, [redacted]

[redacted] *Cobra Judy* was delivered as promised.

[redacted]

(b) (1)
OGA

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36
(b) (6)

~~SECRET~~