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Description of document: National Security Agency (NSA) Oral History of Max O. Mitchell, OH-1987-27

Requested date: 25-June-2022

1st Release date: 30 June 2023

2nd Release date: 03-August-2023

Posted date: 04-September-2023

Note: Material released 03-Aug-2023 starts on PDF page 27

Source of document: Mandatory Declassification Review
National Security Agency
NSA/CSS MDR Appeal Authority P133
National Security Agency
9800 Savage Road STE 6881
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6881

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



Serial: MDR-114547
30 June 2023

This responds to your request of 25 June 2022 to have “Oral History of [redacted], NSA OH 1987-27” reviewed for declassification. The material has been reviewed under the Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR) requirements of Executive Order (E.O.) 13526 and is enclosed. We have determined that some of the information in the material requires protection.

Some portions deleted from the document were found to be currently and properly classified in accordance with E.O. 13526. The information denied meets the criteria for classification as set forth in Section 1.4 subparagraphs (b) and (c), and remains classified TOP SECRET as provided in Section 1.2 of E.O. 13526.

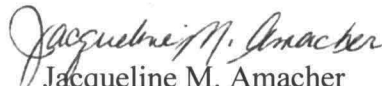
Section 3.5 (c) of E.O. 13526, allows for the protection afforded to information under the provisions of law. Therefore, the names of NSA/CSS employees and information that would reveal NSA/CSS functions and activities have been protected in accordance with Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 3605, formerly 50 U.S. Code 402 note).

Please be advised that the responsive document includes other government agencies’ information. Because we are unable to make a determination as to the releasability of other agencies’ information, the subject document was referred to the appropriate agencies for review. At the time of this letter, some of the responses are outstanding. However, we were able to isolate the other agencies’ equities, so we have protected them using the other government agency (OGA) redaction code. We will certainly revise our response to you, upon receipt of the OGA responses.

Since your request for declassification has been denied you are hereby advised of this Agency’s appeal procedures. Any person denied access to information may file an

appeal to the NSA/CSS MDR Appeal Authority. **The appeal must be postmarked no later than 60 calendar days after the date of the denial letter.** The appeal shall be in writing addressed to the NSA/CSS MDR Appeal Authority (P133), National Security Agency, 9800 Savage Road, STE 6881, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6881. The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularity, the grounds upon which the requester believes the release of information is required. The NSA/CSS MDR Appeal Authority will endeavor to respond to the appeal within 60 working days after receipt of the appeal.

Sincerely,


Jacqueline M. Amacher
Chief
Declassification Services

Encl:
a/s

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OHNR: OH-1987-27

DOI: 22 Oct 1987

TRSID: [redacted]

DTR: 21 Sep 1998

QCSID:

Text Review:

INAME: MITCHELL, Max O.

Text w/Tape:

PLACE: NSA, OPS1, Ft. Meade, MD; DEFSMAC

**VIEWER: [redacted]; TUCKER, Helen;
MARSHALL, Dep. Dir.?; FARLEY, Robert D.**

[Tape 1, Side 1]

Farley: Today is October 22, 1987. Our interviewee, Mr. Max O. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell served as Deputy Chief and later Chief of the DEFSMAC from 1963 to 1967 as an Air Force Colonel from DIA, and later as a civilian. His background in the Air Force was in the missile and space field and the technical intelligence field before he joined DEFSMAC. Mr. Mitchell will recall his experiences during the period from 1963 to 1972. The interview is taking place in DEFSMAC, OPS1, NSA, at Ft. Meade, MD. Interviewer, Bob Farley. Also sitting in on this interview are [redacted] director of DEFSMAC, [redacted] the Deputy Director, and Helen Tucker who is writing the history of DEFSMAC. Mr. Mitchell desires that this single cassette be classified TOP SECRET CODEWORD, TK, BYEMAN, SENSITIVE. This is NSA Oral History number 27-87.

Farley: (Let me give you) a quick run down on what we expect. Shall I call you Max or Colonel or what do you want?

Mitchell: Please.

[TR NOTE: A FEMALE VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND, PRESUMABLY HELEN TUCKER, ASKS MR. FARLEY A QUESTION. HER VOICE IS UNINTELLIGIBLE.]

Farley: Yes, I will talk about that. Would you like to be called Max or Colonel, or Mr. Mitchell, or sir?

Mitchell: Your pleasure. I respond to all (of the above).

Farley: All right, sir. What we want to do is sort of pick your mind about the establishment of the DEFSMAC. We can talk at any level that you like. I have a dispensation form that takes you off the hook for your oath. So you can talk and give us privileged classified information, and then after that you are back on the hook. But as I said, when we finish, I'll just pass it to you. I also have a form called the accessibility form which permits you to say who or who cannot listen to the tape or read the transcripts. So you can say anybody who has any interest or nobody unless I give my personal permission to review this. So you are in control.

~~Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52~~

~~Dated: 20070108~~

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Mitchell: I don't have any restrictions whatsoever that come to mind. I will leave it to you people to be concerned about what security level we end up at.

Farley: All right. If there are certain subjects or certain events in which you were involved that are sensitive that are peculiar to you and you may be the sole individual who knows what they were ... if you want to talk about them and sanitize them if it makes you feel better, just feel free.

 I would like to also add that any of this that gets translated by Helen into the DEFSMAC written history, you'll have a chance to edit before anything gets published.

Mitchell: O.K. I don't have any problem with that.

Farley: All right. You are aware that Helen is writing the history of the DEFSMAC?

Mitchell: Yes, I am aware.

Farley: And we have talked with Mr. Tevis. (He is) the only one that we have talked with so far.

Mitchell: Great guy.

Farley: He gave us a good interview.

Mitchell: Well, I would like to say that I would like to equal Charlie's interview but I know I won't. And few people could.

Farley: We want to be as thorough as we can. Helen, any area that you want an expansion on or a little additional information, feel free and Max will talk about it. Sir the way we would like to do this is to get a quick and dirty of your background before you came to DEFSMAC. Pick it up in your college days or your pre-military days and (then give us) a once over lightly of your military career.

Mitchell: O.K. I am a product of World War II, really. I was in college at Southern Methodist University when the war broke out. Well, not really. Not when the war broke out, but when it became apparent that we were going to get into a conflict. And so at the end of two and half years at Southern Methodist University I along with a whole bunch of my buddies joined what was then called the Army Air Corps. I went to San Diego, California for flying school and flew (1G) trainers. I graduated after nine months of intensive training in the Army Air Corps at Luke Field, Arizona, as a Second Lieutenant on the ninth of January, 1942. Now if you will notice, that is about a month after Pearl Harbor. It looked like of course that we would all go into combat right away. As a matter of fact I did not. I ferried aircraft that were manufactured in East coast aircraft plants to various parts of the United States. Then I left and went to China and flew the hump. I don't know if you ever heard of flying...

Farley: Sure did.

Mitchell: It was an experience believe me. I came back to the United States and at the end of the war it was apparent that we were going to have a significant draw down in our military forces and so I was convinced that I needed to

continue my education. So I did. I went to the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for two years. At that time that was not an accredited college. It is today as I understand. It was not an accredited college but the curricula had been set up by Dr. (B% Seckler) at California Institute of Technology. I applied to go to Cal Tech even without having a Bachelors degree and was accepted. I completed my Masters degree at the California Institute of Technology in 1948. (I went) back to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base after that. I worked in research and development programs. I ran a wind tunnel program at Wright-Patterson and then joined the intelligence business in 1953 with what was then called the Air Technical Intelligence Center. I believe it is now called the Foreign Technology Division at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. I went to Europe in 1953 and went with a technical intelligence program there. (I came) back to the United States in 1956 and was assigned to the Ballistic Missile Division Research & Development Program on the West coast. That was in the early days of the Atlas program and the Titan I missile program. (After) a few years of that I went to a crazy thing that I knew nothing about called DEFSMAC.

Farley: Had you heard about the Air Force Security Service at any time during your career?

Mitchell: Not really. But I knew the intelligence business a little bit from the Air Technical Intelligence Center at that time. But I really did not have any interaction with the cryptologic business at that time. Well, I did not know what on earth I was getting into in a thing called DEFSMAC.

Farley: You were assigned or you volunteered?

Mitchell: I was picked without my knowledge. In those days you did not really arrange assignments very much. It was sort of like... The military records personnel would go through your records and they would try to match your background with a job. I believe the DIA at that time wanted someone with both an intelligence background and a missile space development background. Because apparently that would match this job at DEFSMAC.

Farley: Were you aware of something called Signal Missile and Astronautic Center, the predecessor to DEFSMAC?

Mitchell: No. Not aware of it.

Farley: Not even in your business in the missile (1G)?

Mitchell: Completely aware of NSA. I used to have people from NSA visit us in California. In their endeavors they had a lot of reasons to come to the Ballistic Missile Division and work with our engineers there and in their intelligence programs. So, I was completely aware of NSA but not of the SIGINT center here.

Farley: You were a bird Colonel then?

Mitchell: I was a Colonel.

Farley: All right, sir.

Mitchell: I was selected as the first Deputy Director of DEFSMAC. Now, the center was actually established in April of 1964. I don't know the exact date but the center was established in April, 1964. I did not get here until the first of September of that year.

[redacted] until I got here. He was very instrumental. I give [redacted] a lot of credit in helping get things started. He and Charlie Tevis and Charlie Gordon and [redacted] [redacted], all worked to get this thing established. Now NSA had already had a running start with what I later learned to be the SIGINT Center here. I soon found out after getting here that this was a very, very fortunate assignment for me. It was obviously a very exciting thing. You have to go back... you pardon me and interrupt me if I am...

Farley: Please do. This is all worthwhile.

Mitchell: You have to go back and understand the environment under which all this happened. It was not very long after the Cuban Missile Crisis that this came about. At least the studies and the negotiations and the arguments and all that led up to DEFSMAC. It came not too far after the Cuban Missile Crisis. A lot of assets were owned by the Department of Defense.

[redacted] A lot of assets were owned by the Army, Navy and Air Force Cryptologic Services. There were also things that were not even intelligence oriented that had a very fine application to the problem that we worked for. Like radars operated by NORAD at that time. I guess they are called the Space Command now. Ships, by the Eastern and Western test ranges. But none of this seemed to be focused. There was no way to pull all this together and have it focus right on the problem that we had and that is to collect intelligence against a very rapidly emerging strategic development program that the Soviets had going. Also, since all this existed but was not properly focused... it seemed to be controlled by different organizations... no body conducting the symphony. There was a lot of criticism about this.

[redacted]

To make a long story short, DOD conducted a study of how to bring all this together and (they were) under some pressure because we knew that this active Soviet program which was getting ready to explode into a... second generation missiles were coming along. And so they established a thing called DEFSMAC with a directive, I don't know if it is still an active directive, signed by Mr. McNamara.

[redacted] (XG)

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Mitchell: Still active, that said "Lets put this thing into a better command and control arrangement." That is what DEFSMAC became. All these assets regardless of who owned them and operated them were tied together by this network out here. We tied in communications to all these facilities. We negotiated operating procedures with them. We did not own a thing. And I don't know whether you still do or don't own a thing. But we tied it in so that DEFSMAC... knowing that an event was about to occur, could tell all these people, do your thing that you have been told to do by your parent organization, the guy that owns you, but do it right now and do it this way. By golly it worked. It worked from the word go.

Farley: Sir, was there any conflict, any objection or any friction from the participants who said "Well, I don't want to play"? Or were they all eager to participate?

Mitchell: Early on conflict. I mean very early on conflict before we started demonstrating that it would work. Early on conflict because people were skeptical. "Oh, you know that bunch out at Fort Meade, they are not going to be able to do this." But let me tell you this. The reason that it worked, and I believe this to this day, I'll bet you the reason it works is because the people that were assigned to this job made it work. Charlie Tevis bless his soul. He is around still, good old Charlie, very active I understand. I'll give myself a little credit for that, too. We came in here with the idea that we were going to make this thing work. It worked and the people that were in the operating elements that owned all these assets, they became believers because they could do a better job with the thing they were charged with doing if we were here helping them, encouraging them, but mainly tipping them off and telling them when and where and what. I've got to tell you that it just functioned great from day one.

Farley: When you came in did you see any obstacles or any rough edges or any problems that had to be resolved? I mean there were some obviously because the center had not been functioning for a very long time had it?

Mitchell: Well, when I came in as the first Deputy from DIA I had the job of getting... for example [redacted] DIA people to be assigned out here. You cannot believe how much difficulty that represented. Because the Army, Navy, and Air Force had to cough up billets from within their intelligence structure to put the people out here. Well that is very hard to get people to do. Believe me. I had to go to General... the Director of DIA at that time was General (B% Carroll) and get him to direct that these billets be established. He being a DOD assigned general could not direct the Air Force to give up [redacted] billets for somebody. It was like pulling out teeth. However, it went to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Believe me it did. They directed that these actions take place. And the people that you see out here right now, some of your best people I suspect, like [redacted] [redacted] (They all came in here under that kind of arrangement, almost a directed transfer of billets and people. There was resistance.

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Farley: Were they promised anything? Like you may get a promotion or it is closer to home?

Mitchell: No.

Farley: Were they briefed pretty well on what the mission of DEFSMAC was, what they would be doing?

Mitchell: Oh, yes. The people were, oh yes. As a matter of fact some of the people that were in an Air Force Cryptologic Element that was out here, called AFSO... that is where they came from. They had been working the problem somewhat on the periphery. I say on the periphery, as an outsider to NSA looking in at that time if you will... they were brought in. They were happy with the arrangement to come into it.

Farley: Good. So there was really no problem with morale immediately.

Mitchell: No. None whatever. Again, I will go back to our first Director Charlie Tevis who was a very dynamic, knowledgeable guy and who I am sure put on as purple a suit as he possibly could in order to make this thing function and make people all pull together to make it go. We felt a very significant responsibility all of us did

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[Redacted]

It was a major national intelligence program that was not being worked too well up until that time. So we were concerned about doing it right. All the people were.

Farley: Sir, the funding. Was that NSA money or DIA money or a little bit of each?

Mitchell: NSA basically funded the program. They funded the program in terms of ... well you have to go back and... It depends on what kind of money you are talking about. NSA funded for the communications and the upgrades, computer programs, and the establishment of the automatic processing and all that. NSA funded that. Basically an NSA O & M type of operation. But DIA funded for their own military and civilian travel and that kind of thing. And of course if you look at the assets that were not owned by DEFSMAC and as I said DEFSMAC did not own anything other than their own offices, those were all funded of course by the parent organizations like Army, Navy and Air Force with the exception of the telemetry intercept facilities that the CIA operated called TAXMAN I [Redacted] originally in Iran [Redacted] Of course the Air Force Security Service and the Army Security Agency operated facilities in Shemya [Redacted] But SMAC was sort of a ... we lived off of everybody else. Lets put it that way. Basically off of NSA.

OGA

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Farley: Sir during your tenure as you became a little more comfortable in the organization did you make any recommendations that the organization be restructured to add different elements or close out certain elements and transfer the people to help out on the desks or on the watch?

Mitchell: Not really. There were some tussles that occurred. I am trying to think back to when they were. You see SMAC operated as I indicated with all these assets that were owned by other people, the command and control of it being focused here. But then came the overhead programs. There was sort of a hassle that developed when the first overhead programs were established. DEFSMAC was kept out of that. Well, you have to understand that the overhead programs... can we go into [redacted] and all of that?

Farley: Yes. Yes.

Mitchell: The first program that came along was called the [redacted] program. I don't know what it is called... that was the name of the first satellite

[redacted]
[redacted] and some others. At about the same time there was a program called [redacted] That later became... Refresh my memory [redacted]

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[redacted]
TRNOTE: [redacted] voice is barely audible. It appears that the tape recorder is between Mr. Farley and Mr. Mitchell and the rest of the participants are sitting a good distance away.

Mitchell: Yes. Right. Those programs were not tied into DEFSMAC. They were set up in a separate center here called the triple SC, SSSC, adjacent to DEFSMAC. They were door to door. At that time I had become the Director of DEFSMAC and I pointed out to [redacted] this morning that I believe that I was the only DIA Director of DEFSMAC. Charlie Tevis left and went to a thing called DAGER and I became the Director of DEFSMAC and remained that way as an Air Force Colonel for a year or so. I was assigned to DIA and I wondered why... I was not even cleared for these programs. None of the people in SMAC were.

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Mitchell: So there was this thing being dealt over there and they wanted to tie communications in with SMAC and it was not going to be two way and all that sort of thing so I got my back up. I went to Dr. Lou Tordella, then Deputy Director of NSA, and I said "Let's see what this is all about." It was the jumping of channels of sorts if you will. (B% Arthur Levinson) who was Chief [redacted] at that time said "Go ahead. Talk to him." I really did not go over Arthur's head. He would not have permitted that. To make a long story short wisdom prevailed, they opened those doors and we tied the two together.

Farley: Good.

Mitchell: [redacted]

[Redacted]

We shared in that with [Redacted] and worked the problem quite well. But it was excluded and, I think I was correct in fighting very hard to get that program brought in here and it was. And it worked.

Farley: Good. Sir, do you want to comment at all on the space program? From October 1957, Sputnik and then all the other space programs. You saw it expand tremendously. Could you sort of give us a history of that as you see it or recall it?

Mitchell: Well, of course, the Soviet space program was always very active. They had put up photo reconnaissance satellites one after the other. I think [Redacted] It quite frankly seemed to me that while they were putting it up in quantity, we were putting it up in quality. I never was terribly concerned that they were outpacing us or doing things any better way. They took a brute force highly reliable type program and made it work for them.

[Redacted]

I am probably wrong guys but...

All: (Laughter)

Mitchell: I am extrapolating a bit here.

Farley: Sir, when did you retire?

Mitchell: Five years ago.

Farley:

[Redacted]

Mitchell:

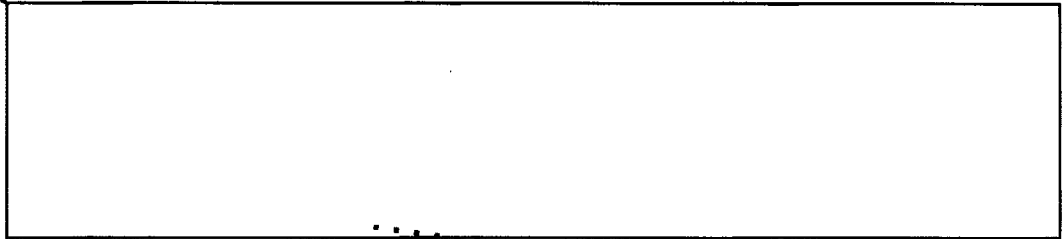
[Redacted]
Mitchell:

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PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

EO 1.4.(b)
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[Redacted]
Mitchell:

Farley: Fine.

Mitchell: One other one.

Farley: How closely could DEFSMAC...

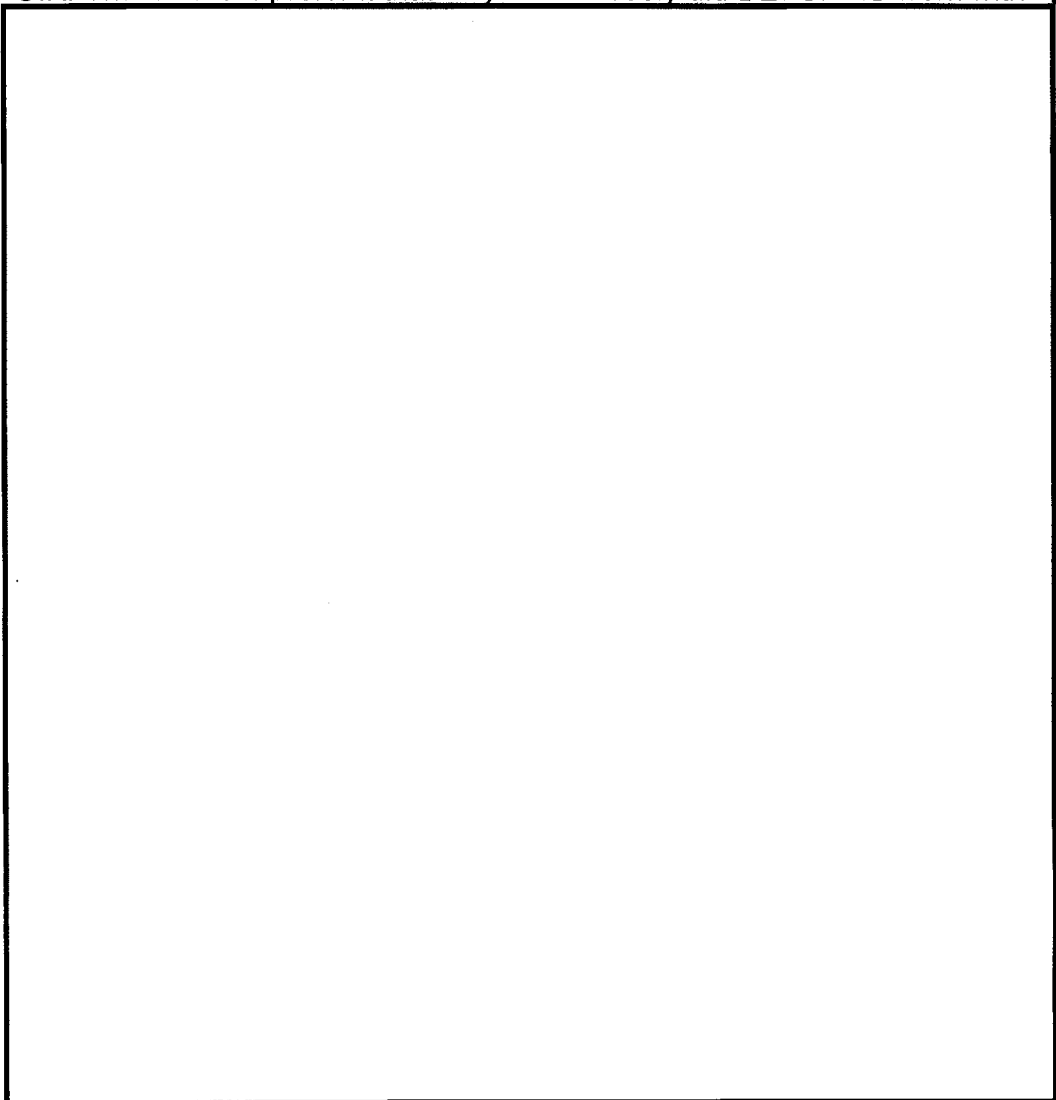
Mitchell: I think you can handle that one.

[Redacted]
Yes.

Farley: O.K. That is fine. I prefer it that way. How closely did DEFSMAC work with

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Mitchell:



Farley: Helen do you want to get into the details of operations? I think we covered

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that pretty fairly with Mr. Tevis.

Mitchell: Is this kind of interview what you want from me?

Farley: Yes. Yes. This is fine. But last time we pretty much got into the low level operation of the troops on the watch.

Mitchell: I don't see any point in repeating that if you did.

Farley: What do you think [redacted] PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

[redacted] It is probably not necessary.

Farley: Helen is there anything that we have not covered so far that you...

Tucker: No, you are covering everything that I thought would be pertinent. (XG).

Mitchell: While we are talking in a general sense let me just say one thing that I thought about DEFSMAC as I look back on it. All of these assets that were all around the world... there were really billions of dollars worth of those... when you add it all up even back in those years back in the 1960's... You take such Air Force programs as the DSP, the Defense Support Program, the infrared satellites that were operated by the Air Defense Command... or whatever it is now, Space Command probably, out at Colorado Springs... At that time they were not even at Colorado Springs... I mean Denver... they were somewhere else... All of these facilities, literally billions of dollars worth and people and all... to be able to pull all that in and focus it to me made DEFSMAC sort of a national asset., And I look upon to this very day as that. I have heard other people, Mr. (B% Slessenger [Schlessinger?]) who was the Director of the CIA at the time referred to it as a real national asset. I would like to get that into whatever you write.

Farley: Yes. Good. What was the relationship with CIA? Did they ever ask you to do something or was there a requirement to satisfy any needs of the CIA, intelligence requirements?

Mitchell: In the missile and space program. But our objectives were so close together that if they asked us we already knew it had to be done. But, yes, we would respond to special things that they wanted done.

Farley: [redacted]

Mitchell: [redacted]

The best place to view it geography wise was from Africa. That was because our facility in Asmara, Ethiopia had been shut down. We had to get into that general area [redacted]

Farley: I don't know if this relates to NASA or to DEFSMAC but early in the game when we were launching from Cape Canaveral there were Soviet missile ships off the coast [redacted]

[redacted] Would DEFSMAC have been involved at all in trying to intercept any of those operational signals?

Mitchell: Not really. Well, peripherally, because I guess... [redacted] you might help we out here... whether the guys at [redacted] would get involved in that or not.

[redacted] I am not sure when that started. It turns out that there is a program to do that.

Mitchell: We would tip off any other organization that might have been involved in trying to intercept. The main one that comes to mind is the shop at [redacted]

[redacted]

Mitchell: Yes. Yes.

Farley: Good. I'll just run through some of these events in case you want to comment on them. The first manned flight and the photo of the cosmonaut. Were you around in those days?

Mitchell: No. It was just prior to my time here.

Farley: O.K. Because I remember seeing the photo of the cosmonaut that (3G).

Mitchell: The Gagarin flight?

Farley: Right. In [redacted] think it was. The first woman in space.

Mitchell: Yes.

Farley: Question: How did you tell it was a woman?

Mitchell: [redacted] What was her name?

Farley: She married Gagarin didn't she? No, she married one of the cosmonauts.

Mitchell: We did not know it was a woman until it went up if I remember correctly.

[redacted] in fact they even talked about it. The Soviets announced it rather rapidly too for propaganda purposes mainly.

Farley: So, it was announced before they launched.

Mitchell: But in those days you knew it was going to be a manned flight when they would deploy ships in the Pacific out along the Earth trace that they were going to fly. They put so many ships along this that it was obvious that they were concerned about maybe a splashdown right after launch instead of going into orbit. So, you knew it would be a manned space flight but you did not know exactly how many they would put up or that sort of thing.

Farley: The old (B% Smears) and (B% Seabers) the Soviet missile instrumentation ships. I remember that.

Mitchell: Right.

Farley: The Vostok series. Was this a surprise when they went to the Vostok? Or did you anticipate that?

Mitchell: Not really.

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Farley: O.K. Soyuz. Soyuz from 1967 to 1975. Was that the deep space probes?

Mitchell: Soyuz. Ummm.

Farley: That's all right. We can dig that out of the...

Mitchell: Yes. I know the term but it escapes me.

Farley: All right. How closely did you work with the scientific world... and I am

Mitchell:

Farley:

Mitchell:

Farley:

Mitchell:

Farley: I don't know about this one. Any firings or launchings which were reported by collateral sources before your reports reached the street. Any unreported firings?

Mitchell: Well if you talk about a report reaching the street... if you are talking in terms of something being written or published... SMAC could in fact get a report in a matter of minutes. The initial reports that came out of SMAC were over the telephone to the watch community to DIA, to the National Military Command Center, to CIA, to NORAD which is now Space Command I guess, and others. I don't know how many there were. It went out simultaneously and immediately. They all knew about it. And our first judgement of what this was to relieve peoples minds went out very promptly and then within a few minutes a little paragraph saying here is what this is. I'll tell you it was important in those early days to do this because it was sort of an uptight world we were living in. But then it began to sort of calm itself down and we were able to go into I won't say a more relaxed mode, not relaxed, but a more delayed mode. But even to the day that I left here and the day I left this building five years ago there was considerable pressure throughout the intelligence community, DIA, CIA, Army, Navy, Air Force, to get the assessment of these events in their hands early on after it occurred. Of course we did everything we could to honor that.

Farley: Excuse me. Let me switch (tapes).

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

Mitchell: I was going to say (B% Terris) (1G). It is the same one... it reminded me of

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OGA

the girl that was the Olympic gymnast. The names were almost the same.
Farley: Would you say that again [redacted] This is the name of the female cosmonaut.
Valentina (B% B.) Tereshkova went up on Vostok 6 in 1963.

Farley: Good. 1963. Good. Well, you talked about the intelligence...

Mitchell: Well, that would have been prior to my time here but somehow or another it stuck in my mind and maybe it was the next launch. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Of course, he was killed on re-entry. In addition to that there was another one that occurred not long after that in which three Soviet cosmonauts died. And they died because of the decompression of the space capsule when it came down. [redacted]

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Farley: They survived though?

Mitchell: They did survive.

Farley: Good. It just skipped my mind but I'll come to it.

[redacted] That first crash was Komarov and they have since named one of the support ships after him. And the three of them were (B% Georgi Dobrovolski), (B% Vanislov Volkov), and (B% Viktor Popsiev) and there [are] also ships named after each of those three.

Farley: Oh. Good. That is some honor. [redacted]

Mitchell: [redacted] That was a job that was left to the radar operating organization called... at Colorado Springs, Air Defense... What is it named [redacted]

[redacted] Well... (B% SPADATS) and the space track system that is currently the space surveillance... (XG).

Farley: Sir, during your tenure in DEFSMAC did you see the need to make any changes in the organization? We talked about that earlier but did you find that some areas were deficient or overworked?

Mitchell: We did not make any basic organizational changes. We made adjustments as we needed to. For example, when the center became

automated... when we first did this job it was sort of a by hand operation, not very much computer support. We had Opscomms direct to many of these facilities but each one had to have an operator sitting right there at the machine. As we were able to get more automation and computer support and computer graphics, we made changes and we did have to set up a special data processing group but basically we remained organized with an intelligence organization headed up by our analysts, staffed by our intelligence analysts both from DIA and NSA, an operations center that was largely manned by NSA people and when I say NSA people I include the Service Cryptologic Agency people that are assigned here, officer and enlisted. But we did have to set up a special data processing group and DIA contributed very heavily in that regard.

Farley: Sir, how closely did you work with the R&D people, either in NSA or in various computer or other R&D corporations, devising or suggesting the development of certain types of equipment to support your mission?

Mitchell: We worked very closely with R here because the center had to be upgraded twice, or maybe the third time now. And R helped devise the programs, mainly the automation part of it, the computer driven graphics, the display systems and that sort of thing. So R did support us very strongly. We set aside a small group of people dedicated to that job, to work with R. It was originally headed up by a man by the name of (B% Luther Green). I don't know who (assumed the role) since (B% Luther) left, even before I left here. But it was supported very well by R but we had a little group of people dedicated to that job with them.

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Farley: Good. You mentioned (B% Luther Green). He was [redacted] way back when techniques and technology...

Mitchell: Right, right.

Farley: I noticed that looking at this organization chart that all the other elements in the building had what they called either an [redacted]

[redacted]

Mitchell: Well, you might not have seen the number but let me tell you that we had one of the best [redacted] you ever saw... largely DIA assigned people in the intelligence organization here. I mean they were good and still are.

Farley: So there were a group of reporters?

Mitchell: O, yes. There were. And cranked out literally thousands of very high quality rapidly reported products.

[redacted] One question I guess I should ask... Was the organizational relationship with DIA and where that plugged into the organization and also any... relational situations you would want to talk about with [redacted] and with (B% Neil Carson) and the SSSC and did you have any dealings with NSOC? That was not set up until 1973 and I cannot remember...

OGA

Mitchell: Well, lets take those one at a time. I can't remember them all so jog my

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mind as we go here. To go back to Helen's...

[redacted]

With DIA (1G).

Mitchell:

I believe that the directive said that the Director of DEFSMAC shall be jointly agreed to or selected by the Director of NSA and DIA and it was never said one way or the other where that director would come from. It was initially understood it would come from NSA because the SIGINT center existed here. And DIA did not really have the assets, the personnel assets to put into it. But there was never any hard and fast rule about where that individual would come from. Now it turned out that I was the first DIA military officer at the time, Colonel, Air Force, assigned to DIA that became the director of DEFSMAC by joint agreement between General (B% Carroll) and then who was the Army general in charge of NSA at the time?

Tucker:

Carter.

Marshall:

Carter. Marshall Carter. Now, why though over the years was there not another DIA... I don't believe there has ever been another one. I think I can tell you why that is. If I looked at it from not only from being in SMAC but Chief of W1 and Deputy Chief of W later, the ability to live in this building and get things done by all the supporting elements around here, R, (B% TCOM) whatever it is called now, all of this vast array of things that have to be done in support of DEFSMAC... it just seemed that it could not be done very well without having an NSA guy that knew all these people and knew all the intricacies of it and could work all the ins and outs... did not seem that it could be done very efficiently unless there was a senior NSA official in charge. That is what I felt the situation to be. Not that I had any trouble when I was the director. Well, I guess I did have a few problems. Not because I was from DIA but I just did not know my way around as well as others.

[redacted]

Who did you work for personally when you were director as a DIA employee?

Marshall:

My efficiency report was made out by one [redacted] [redacted] was assigned to him. But I also worked... and [redacted]

[redacted]

He had not set up DC though.

Marshall:

Not at that time but later did and we came under DC.

[redacted]

Directly or...

Marshall:

The DIA element out here came under DC. Now, I said to myself, I am wearing a purple suit. I am going to report just as strongly to [redacted] [redacted] downtown out of the DC... or whoever as I am going to report to Mr. Don (B% Boorman) [redacted] and Mr. Arthur (B% Levinson) [redacted] I was welcomed into the staff meetings [redacted] I was welcomed into the infrastructure of the National

OGA

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Security Agency. I have to hand it to them. They gave me all the support in the world. But, I still say, from my perspective back then, to get the expensive things done around here and after all if you put in a communications system and a computer program and mainframe computers and all that to do this job you had to have very strong NSA support and I think that is the reason why we gravitated more to having the senior guy here be from NSA. [redacted] I don't know if that meets your perspective on it or not?

[redacted]
[redacted]

Exactly what I wanted.

In the early days, what was the proportion of people from NSA as opposed to...

Marshall: Well we were about a [redacted] man shop and I think [redacted] [redacted] That is give or take a few. High quality people. DIA put some quality into this place. Especially in the intelligence analysis area. We had a direct link downtown. It was not a secret one between here and there, to DIA, not one. I was never asked to do anything but my DIA supervisors that they would not have asked right through to the top floor of this building to get done. I have to gave them credit for that because it was ripe for problems. But it never occurred.

Farley: That is quite an accomplishment that they were able to work so closely together.

Mitchell: Absolutely remarkable because this is a competitive intelligence world and everybody wants to be first on the street with the most.

Farley: Do you know whether it has changed? Because I remember General (B% Carroll) was a pretty strong man and subsequent directors of DIA were not as strong as he. Has anything changed with respect to DEFSMAC when these people came in, the successors?

Mitchell: They all pointed to it as... "Look at that. Look at this very successful cooperative effort out here." You know (1G) served their political purposes to do that or whatever. But everybody pointed at SMAC and said "Gee, why can't we all do that well?" [redacted]

OGA

Farley: Good. Helen, you had a question? A follow on question.

Mitchell: I hope I am not putting to much frosting on this cake. I am very proud, very proud of what happened here.

Tucker: This follow on question came after (2-3G). (XG).

Farley: Oh. But did you get an answer?

Tucker: Yes. (2-3G).

Farley: O.K. Good. Colonel do you have any...

[redacted]

Was there ever any pressure or thought given to have the analysis here within the center be a more long term analysis or was the pressure always to do immediate...

Mitchell:

Well, our directive that set us up gave us [redacted] in which to report. We would report those events and the things that occurred and make analysis [redacted] after the event. Well, describing an event was sort of difficult because it could go for years. A manned orbiting thing goes on and on for ever. But we tried to keep ourselves... We enough on our plate, lets put it that way, to do our job in the current time frame. We did not have enough time to devote ourselves to in-depth analytical work. Charlie Tevis and I after him and I believe Gordon (B% Stark) after me... Gordon (B% Stark) was a very capable guy... insisted on doing first things first and that was a current analysis job. I will say this though, I bet you... and I felt that in my day here and I would suggest that you might even feel this way now, there is no one that is as expert on the Soviet space program as a fellow by the name of [redacted]. If I had to find an analyst, back when I was here, that could give you an in depth look at their program... any where in the United States, that is the guy I would name. I believe [redacted] also fell into that category in the missile program. I don't know of anyone that I would turn to to ask a question and get a straight answer about than those two guys. So they were inclined, they wanted to do more in depth work because they had the ability and the knowledge and I guess I would say that it is sort of a shame that we could not let them do it, could not encourage it. Maybe they should have someday moved to another job to permit them to do that but of course they didn't. Do you feel that way [redacted] about those guys?

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[redacted]

Yes. Absolutely.

Mitchell:

I do. Very strong, strong people. But we were not... our mission was not to go out and compete with FTD [redacted] or somebody else that had that job. That is the way that we looked at it then.

OGA

[redacted]

In a similar vein, a follow up question. The charter, the DOD directive actually gave some authority for control of processing as well as collection resources and as far as I know that was never exercised. Was that because of resource constraints? Actually the word processing is used in the charter and I don't know that DEFSMAC really ever got into that...

Mitchell:

Well, I think that the term processing there is used in a... would not include such things as [redacted]. I think it meant that initial messaging of the data, whatever it is, you process it in a very limited sense so that you can make that initial intelligence judgement.

[redacted]

O.K. There was some of that done with [redacted]

Mitchell:

[redacted]

But that was done by the NSA elements that were here... I won't say surrounding DEFSMAC but in a sense they were. The old [redacted] what is it now? What was it when I left here?

[redacted]

Well it is all now part of W1.

Mitchell: Yes [redacted]
[redacted] Right. It is now [redacted] and W1 (1G).

Mitchell: Right, right.

Farley: Helen, (B% can you think of) anything else? I am going to ask about the accomplishment or accomplishments of which you are most proud during your service here.

Mitchell: I was thinking about that after you mentioned it earlier. And I don't want to go in on any one event, limited even, or anything like that. If you ask yourself the question back in 1964 and right on through to today, what is probably THE major intelligence concern or THE major strategic concern that the United States has it is that array of literally thousands of ICBM's that are sitting over there on pads that are pointed in the direction of the United States and the fact that we have over the years tried to negotiate with the Soviets some sort of an arrangement whereby that can all be limited, cut down in size and somehow controlled so we do not have an unthinkable nuclear war. The basis for knowing what that is, what its technical capability is, what we are really looking at over there, not only in numbers but what it can do to you. [redacted]

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[redacted] All those assets watching that program, those programs, as they were developed and of course with the photographic programs as they were deployed. I believe that this organization and the people that we worked with did an outstanding job in keeping our national leaders informed about those programs as they emerged and as they were put in place. I think we did a tremendous job and I think the nation owes us some thanks and that is what I am proud of.

Farley: Did the troops ever receive any kudos or thank you much or well dones?

Mitchell: Oh, many awards. Many awards. And the guys got promoted in SMAC. I never did but (3G) well I did too. I got hired as a super grade here.

Farley: Great. Well, that is an accomplishment.

Mitchell: To me doing that big, big, very important job, a job of national importance and doing it well over the years is what I consider our accomplishment.

Farley: Good. That is an excellent answer. Sir upon your departure, I am sure there were problems within DEFSMAC. Problems like shortage of talent, we need more people, too much work, things we could do if we had more people. Is there any major problem that stands out in your mind that you recall upon your departure?

Mitchell: Well, now I have to be careful that I don't think in terms of when I left W five years ago as opposed to SMAC twelve or thirteen years ago. There is a difference.

Farley: Well, any regrets that you have like what you wanted to have done but that could not be accomplished for various reasons, money, people,

bureaucracy? So if you want to put that all into one answer that would be great.

Mitchell: Well, let me think about that for just a minute. Shut your machine off because I am going to think for a minute.

TR NOTE: RECORDING STOPS FOR AN UNDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME. UPON RESUMPTION, THE CONVERSATION BEGINS MID SENTENCE.

Mitchell: ... All the military force operations, just built in for conflict. We never let it happen.

Farley: Were there problems? Maybe there never were problems.

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Mitchell: I cannot really put my finger on anything that I would say that was. In a sense we were spoiled. We were given assets. We were given the [redacted] program. We were given the overhead programs. We were given the where with all to get our job done. I can't say that we really suffered from any real serious deficiencies. there were impediments that came along that began to really hurt us. Like I don't know where you stand on [redacted]

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Farley: You had pretty much the pick of the talent too didn't you, from both agencies.

Mitchell: Well, I wont say that we had the pick but I will say that the parent organizations provided us with good, talented people. As you know, in any outfit you negotiate with people individually to say "Would you like to come to work over here?" If they liked the job and saw the opportunities, they would come. So we were able to attract good people but it was clearly a good place to come to work.

[redacted]
Mitchell:

[redacted]
Mitchell:

Farley:

Mitchell:

Farley:

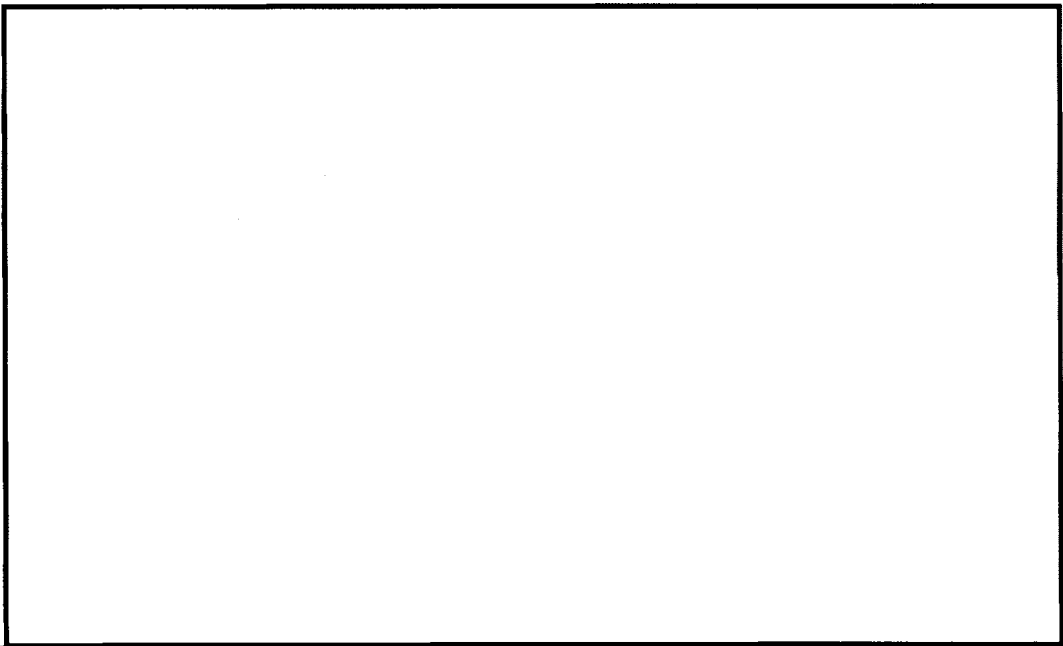
[redacted]
Mitchell:

Farley:

Mitchell:

[redacted]

[redacted]



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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Time flies.

Farley: Helen, do you have any other questions?

Tucker: (B% You've) just done a remarkable job, stuck right to the point. I don't think you have wandered at all.

Mitchell: I think I have rambled a great deal and if I have become too profuse about my praise I apologize. But I tell you I don't believe anybody that has worked in this outfit, certainly as long as I did, could leave here without feeling that way.

Farley: Well, that is a complement to the organization as well as to yourself and your management techniques. So, pat yourself on the back, too.

Mitchell: Thank you.

Farley: Colonel do you have any other questions? [Redacted]

[Redacted]

The only thing I would... I guess we still have a few minutes before I have to leave... whether or not there was any other perspective as you went directly from here to Deputy Chief W, is that right?

Marshall: I went from here to Chief of W. No, no. Chief of W1.

[Redacted]

O.K.

Marshall: Chief of W1, I am sorry.

[Redacted]

Would you like to say anything about... we covered your career before DEFSMAC, would you like to say anything about after DEFSMAC that might give some perspective to the...

Mitchell: Well, (B% Gordon Stark) was the Chief of Operations or Chief of the division here when I left and he moved in as Chief of DEFSMAC, Director of DEFSMAC, when I went over as Chief of W1. And the very fine relationship that existed between Gordon and I here in SMAC continued when I was over there in W1. It was nice to be able to continue working with Gordon who I think was a very strong capable guy and later did very fine work throughout the agency as well as while he was in SMAC. I guess I don't really have any other perspective on it [Redacted] other than that we were able to continue a very nice, close relationship.

Farley: We are trying to get him back to talk but he loves Yakima I guess.

Mitchell: Is he still in Yakima?

Tucker: (XG)

[Redacted]

He is moving to Arizona.

Farley: Oh, I did not know that.

Mitchell: Is he... Gordon still coming into the building? Does he still have all his clearances? I wonder...

Tucker: (XG).

[redacted]

On (B% master ship).

Tucker:

Yes, he has two hats that he wears.

[redacted]

We have a new processing analysis development and Gordon is associated with a contractor that doing that.

Mitchell:

Oh, I see. I had thought about when I left here... or even... it crosses my mind occasionally still down there... saying "Well Max why don't you get back into the building in some official capacity. Is there some way that you could offer some help to the organization on a part time basis?" I have not done that mainly because I am in an out of the way place down there. At Eglin Air Force Base there is the Tactical Air Warfare Center, and I had thought "Well, maybe I should offer the opportunity for my services there on a free basis to go over and be a rep there or make arrangements for whatever they needed done." I don't know whether they have a rep there or not. Does NSA have a rep at Eglin?

Farley:

I don't think so.

[redacted]

I don't think so.

Mitchell:

I would think they might need one there. The Tactical Air Warfare Center from a W2 point of view would probably be a useful thing to do and I had thought about offering to do that but I never did. And maybe after having been out of here five years it would not be useful to do that now. I don't know.

Tucker:

(XG). You remember [redacted] He was in on the briefing this morning. He is also as I understand an unpaid endeavor. Strictly out of...

Mitchell:

[redacted] and Charlie Tevis and who else? We had three consultants when I left. [redacted] and Charlie and... I don't know who it was. We were limited to how many we could have. I guess Charlie is still very active isn't he?

Tucker:

Oh, yes.

Farley:

He is. He never slowed down.

Mitchell:

Not just on W type problems but agency wide problems I suspect.

Farley:

Yes. He'll never slow down that boy.

Mitchell:

Right. Well, I always looked upon Charlie as a brilliant guy.

Farley:

We had an exceptionally interesting interview with him.

Marshall:

I am sure you did.

Farley:

About his early days.

Marshall:

I would have loved to have heard it.

Farley:

[redacted] what do you think? Any other questions?

[redacted]

No, I think that's super. Exactly what we needed.

Farley:

Colonel, anything? Helen?

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Tucker: Nope.

Farley: Colonel, beautiful, wonderful. Appreciate the time. It has been most enjoyable and most informative.

Marshall: Thank you, very much.

Farley: We will transcribe this and hope to get a copy to you someday for your review and if not Helen will incorporate most of the material into her...

Marshall: Are you going to... It will be a classified publication I guess.

Tucker: Yes sir. Right now we are thinking (2G) TK BYEMAN. I don't see how we can really do it... (XG).

Marshall: I don't see how you could either. Well, I would have a difficult time reviewing that because if you go into anything since five years ago it would not be history and...

Farley: We can give you a quick blessing as I say with these forms.

[redacted] When we get something down on paper we will get back with you. I think one of the problems being relayed here is in transcribing the tapes.

Mitchell: I know how that goes.

[redacted] (XG) limitations and it takes time to do that. As far as reviewing anything that you contributed to... we will make sure that in the history that happens because we want to get all the glitches out of it that we can certainly before we publish it.

[redacted] I just thought of a question as (B% we spent time). It seems like... I have only been here less than two months but it seems like we have an inordinate number of visitors that come through DEFSMAC. Was that always the case? And how did you view that?

Mitchell: I briefed every body with the exception of the President of the United States in my time here I mean literally. Every cabinet official that had a clearance was out here. Of course, all of them do. Any official in almost any capacity of importance was out here. They went through that center and we spent hours and hours and hours briefing them. At the time I complained. As a matter of fact I got to where I could not stand up and give a briefing anymore. it got that bad right toward the end of my time here. I just got to where I could not do it anymore. I felt like I was always on the point of a sword. But lets look back. Why did that occur? It was not just because it was bright lights. It was because we were working the most important strategic problem at the time. People were interested in how well it was being done. Yes it was exciting. It was something that NSA and DIA could point to and get a few benefits out of. But I would never... looking back on it I would never complain about the fact that there was a lot of interest in this very fine important shop. Because if it did not come you are going to start seeing the assets fall off and the interest will not be there and you will have a hard time doing your job. That is the way that I looked at it. It does take away from your day. It does put people behind the eight

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ball. A lot of time and effort goes into it... or did go into it. But I believe on balance it was well worth it.

Farley: It was good exposure too. And a lot of these people, they were curious about what was going on in DEFSMAC.

Mitchell: Sure they were.

Farley: Their friends had told them about it and they said "Gee we ought to go out there and see that." It just sort of perpetuated the...

Mitchell: Yes. That's right. It helped get assets for the job.

[Redacted]: It goes on today.

Mitchell: Why not.

Farley: Sir, thank you, again, for your time.

Mitchell: Yes, sir.

Farley: It was most enjoyable.

[End of Interview OH-1987-27-MITCHELL]



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



Serial: MDR-114547 [rev]
03 August 2023

REF: NSA MDR-11457 response letter, dated 30 June 2023

This is an update to the referenced response to your request of 25 June 2022 to have "Oral History of [redacted], NSA OH 1987-27" reviewed for declassification. The material was reviewed under the Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR) requirements of Executive Order (E.O.) 13526.

You were advised that the responsive document included other government agencies' information. Because NSA was unable to make a determination as to the releasability of their information, the subject document was referred to the appropriate agencies for review. Attached are selected revised pages from the document with additional declassified information, as authorized by an other government agency.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline M. Amacher *per*

Chief

Declassification Services

Encl:

a/s

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OHNR: OH-1987-27

DOI: 22 Oct 1987

TRSID: [redacted]

DTR: 21 Sep 1998

QCSID:

Text Review:

INAME: MITCHELL, Max O.

Text w/Tape:

PLACE: NSA, OPS1, Ft. Meade, MD; DEFSMAC

**VIEWER: [redacted]; TUCKER, Helen;
MARSHALL, Dep. Dir.?; FARLEY, Robert D.**

[Tape 1, Side 1]

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Farley: Today is October 22, 1987. Our interviewee, Mr. Max O. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell served as Deputy Chief and later Chief of the DEFSMAC from 1963 to 1967 as an Air Force Colonel from DIA, and later as a civilian. His background in the Air Force was in the missile and space field and the technical intelligence field before he joined DEFSMAC. Mr. Mitchell will recall his experiences during the period from 1963 to 1972. The interview is taking place in DEFSMAC, OPS1, NSA at Ft. Meade, MD. Interviewer, Bob Farley. Also sitting in on this interview are [redacted] director of DEFSMAC, [redacted] the Deputy Director, and Helen Tucker who is writing the history of DEFSMAC. Mr. Mitchell desires that this single cassette be classified TOP SECRET CODEWORD, TK, BYEMAN, SENSITIVE. This is NSA Oral History number 27-87.

Farley: (Let me give you) a quick run down on what we expect. Shall I call you Max or Colonel or what do you want?

Mitchell: Please.

[TR NOTE: A FEMALE VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND, PRESUMABLY HELEN TUCKER, ASKS MR. FARLEY A QUESTION. HER VOICE IS UNINTELLIGIBLE.]

Farley: Yes, I will talk about that. Would you like to be called Max or Colonel, or Mr. Mitchell, or sir?

Mitchell: Your pleasure. I respond to all (of the above).

Farley: All right, sir. What we want to do is sort of pick your mind about the establishment of the DEFSMAC. We can talk at any level that you like. I have a dispensation form that takes you off the hook for your oath. So you can talk and give us privileged classified information, and then after that you are back on the hook. But as I said, when we finish, I'll just pass it to you. I also have a form called the accessibility form which permits you to say who or who cannot listen to the tape or read the transcripts. So you can say anybody who has any interest or nobody unless I give my personal permission to review this. So you are in control.

~~Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52~~

~~Dated: 20070108~~

~~Declassify On: 20291123~~

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Mitchell: I was selected as the first Deputy Director of DEFSMAC. Now, the center was actually established in April of 1964. I don't know the exact date but the center was established in April, 1964. I did not get here until the first of September of that year. [redacted]

[redacted] until I got here. He was very instrumental. I give [redacted] a lot of credit in helping get things started. He and Charlie Tevis and Charlie Gordon and [redacted] [redacted], all worked to get this thing established. Now NSA had already had a running start with what I later learned to be the SIGINT Center here. I soon found out after getting here that this was a very, very fortunate assignment for me. It was obviously a very exciting thing. You have to go back... you pardon me and interrupt me if I am...

Farley: Please do. This is all worthwhile.

Mitchell: You have to go back and understand the environment under which all this happened. It was not very long after the Cuban Missile Crisis that this came about. At least the studies and the negotiations and the arguments and all that led up to DEFSMAC. It came not too far after the Cuban Missile Crisis. A lot of assets were owned by the Department of Defense. A lot of assets were owned by the CIA, I mean assets that applied to the missile and space problem. A lot of assets were owned by the Army, Navy and Air Force Cryptologic Services. There were also things that were not even intelligence oriented that had a very fine application to the problem that we worked for. Like radars operated by NORAD at that time. I guess they are called the Space Command now. Ships, by the Eastern and Western test ranges. But none of this seemed to be focused. There was no way to pull all this together and have it focus right on the problem that we had and that is to collect intelligence against a very rapidly emerging strategic development program that the Soviets had going. Also, since all this existed but was not properly focused... it seemed to be controlled by different organizations... no body conducting the symphony. There was a lot of criticism about this. In fact I believe CIA went so far as to say "Look, if you at the Department of Defense don't focus this properly, we are going to do it. We are going to set up a center over here at Langley and we are going to tie all this together because somehow this has to be (2G) command and control setup." In fact they even established (a project) over there called FMSAC, Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center headed up by Dr. Bud Wheelon. Dr. Bud Wheelon is I think President of Hughes Aircraft now. A very capable guy. In fact THE man that briefed President Kennedy about the missile crisis in Cuba. He did that. He and Carl (B% Duckett). To make a long story short, DOD conducted a study of how to bring all this together and (they were) under some pressure because we knew that this active Soviet program which was getting ready to explode into a... second generation missiles were coming along. And so they established a thing called DEFSMAC with a directive, I don't know if it is still an active directive, signed by Mr. McNamara.

[redacted] (XG)

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Farley: Were they promised anything? Like you may get a promotion or it is closer to home?

Mitchell: No.

Farley: Were they briefed pretty well on what the mission of DEFSMAC was, what they would be doing?

Mitchell: Oh, yes. The people were, oh yes. As a matter of fact some of the people that were in an Air Force Cryptologic Element that was out here, called AFSO... that is where they came from. They had been working the problem somewhat on the periphery. I say on the periphery, as an outsider to NSA looking in at that time if you will... they were brought in. They were happy with the arrangement to come into it.

Farley: Good. So there was really no problem with morale immediately.

Mitchell: No. None whatever. Again, I will go back to our first Director Charlie Tevis who was a very dynamic, knowledgeable guy and who I am sure put on as purple a suit as he possibly could in order to make this thing function and make people all pull together to make it go. We felt a very significant responsibility all of us did

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[REDACTED]

It was a major national intelligence program that was not being worked too well up until that time. So we were concerned about doing it right. All the people were.

Farley: Sir, the funding. Was that NSA money or DIA money or a little bit of each?

Mitchell: NSA basically funded the program. They funded the program in terms of ... well you have to go back and... It depends on what kind of money you are talking about. NSA funded for the communications and the upgrades, computer programs, and the establishment of the automatic processing and all that. NSA funded that. Basically an NSA O & M type of operation. But DIA funded for their own military and civilian travel and that kind of thing. And of course if you look at the assets that were not owned by DEFSMAC and as I said DEFSMAC did not own anything other than their own offices, those were all funded of course by the parent organizations like Army, Navy and Air Force with the exception of the telemetry intercept facilities that the CIA operated called TAXMAN I and TAXMAN II originally, . . . in Iran [REDACTED] Of course the Air Force Security Service and the Army Security Agency operated facilities in Shemya [REDACTED] But SMAC was sort of a ... we lived off of everybody else. Lets put it that way. Basically off of NSA.

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Farley: Sir during your tenure as you became a little more comfortable in the organization did you make any recommendations that the organization be restructured to add different elements or close out certain elements and transfer the people to help out on the desks or on the watch?

that pretty fairly with Mr. Tevis.

Mitchell: Is this kind of interview what you want from me?

Farley: Yes. Yes. This is fine. But last time we pretty much got into the low level operation of the troops on the watch.

Mitchell: I don't see any point in repeating that if you did.

Farley: What do you think [redacted] PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

[redacted] It is probably not necessary.

Farley: Helen is there anything that we have not covered so far that you...

Tucker: No, you are covering everything that I thought would be pertinent. (XG).

Mitchell: While we are talking in a general sense let me just say one thing that I thought about DEFSMAC as I look back on it. All of these assets that were all around the world... there were really billions of dollars worth of those... when you add it all up even back in those years back in the 1960's... You take such Air Force programs as the DSP, the Defense Support Program, the infrared satellites that were operated by the Air Defense Command... or whatever it is now, Space Command probably, out at Colorado Springs... At that time they were not even at Colorado Springs... I mean Denver... they were somewhere else... All of these facilities, literally billions of dollars worth and people and all... to be able to pull all that in and focus it to me made DEFSMAC sort of a national asset., And I look upon to this very day as that. I have heard other people, Mr. (B% Slessenger [Schlessinger?]) who was the Director of the CIA at the time referred to it as a real national asset. I would like to get that into whatever you write.

Farley: Yes. Good. What was the relationship with CIA? Did they ever ask you to do something or was there a requirement to satisfy any needs of the CIA, intelligence requirements?

Mitchell: In the missile and space program. But our objectives were so close together that if they asked us we already knew it had to be done. But, yes, we would respond to special things that they wanted done.

Farley: State Department. Was there any involvement? Did State have any involvement at all other than peripherally?

Mitchell: Well, only in making arrangements for special deployments and things like that. I can remember when we had to put a facility in to South Africa at one time. And by working with the CIA and the State Department we were able to do it. (This was done) so that we could watch a Soviet planetary probe. The best place to view it geography wise was from Africa. That was because our facility in Asmara, Ethiopia had been shut down. We had to get into that general area and so we went into South Africa to do it.

Farley: I don't know if this relates to NASA or to DEFSMAC but early in the game when we were launching from Cape Canaveral there were Soviet missile ships off the coast [redacted]

automated... when we first did this job it was sort of a by hand operation, not very much computer support. We had Opscomms direct to many of these facilities but each one had to have an operator sitting right there at the machine. As we were able to get more automation and computer support and computer graphics, we made changes and we did have to set up a special data processing group but basically we remained organized with an intelligence organization headed up by our analysts, staffed by our intelligence analysts both from DIA and NSA, an operations center that was largely manned by NSA people and when I say NSA people I include the Service Cryptologic Agency people that are assigned here, officer and enlisted. But we did have to set up a special data processing group and DIA contributed very heavily in that regard.

Farley: Sir, how closely did you work with the R&D people, either in NSA or in various computer or other R&D corporations, devising or suggesting the development of certain types of equipment to support your mission?

Mitchell: We worked very closely with R here because the center had to be upgraded twice, or maybe the third time now. And R helped devise the programs, mainly the automation part of it, the computer driven graphics, the display systems and that sort of thing. So R did support us very strongly. We set aside a small group of people dedicated to that job, to work with R. It was originally headed up by a man by the name of (B% Luther Green). I don't know who (assumed the role) since (B% Luther) left, even before I left here. But it was supported very well by R but we had a little group of people dedicated to that job with them.

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Farley: Good. You mentioned (B% Luther Green). He was [redacted] way back when techniques and technology...

Mitchell: Right, right.

Farley: I noticed that looking at this organization chart that all the other elements in the building had what they called either an [redacted]

[redacted]

Mitchell: Well, you might not have seen the number but let me tell you that we had one of the best [redacted] you ever saw... largely DIA assigned people in the intelligence organization here. I mean they were good and still are.

Farley: So there were a group of reporters?

Mitchell: O, yes. There were. And cranked out literally thousands of very high quality rapidly reported products.

[redacted] One question I guess I should ask... Was the organizational relationship with DIA and where that plugged into the organization and also any relational situations you would want to talk about with FMSAC and with (B% Neil Carson) and the SSSC and did you have any dealings with NSOC? That was not set up until 1973 and I cannot remember...

Mitchell: Well, lets take those one at a time. I can't remember them all so jog my

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Security Agency. I have to hand it to them. They gave me all the support in the world. But, I still say, from my perspective back then, to get the expensive things done around here and after all if you put in a communications system and a computer program and mainframe computers and all that to do this job you had to have very strong NSA support and I think that is the reason why we gravitated more to having the senior guy here be from NSA. [redacted] I don't know if that meets your perspective on it or not?

[redacted] Exactly what I wanted.

[redacted] In the early days, what was the proportion of people from NSA as opposed to...

Marshall: Well we were about a [redacted] man shop and I think [redacted] [redacted] That is give or take a few. High quality people. DIA put some quality into this place. Especially in the intelligence analysis area. We had a direct link downtown. It was not a secret one between here and there, to DIA, not one. I was never asked to do anything but my DIA supervisors that they would not have asked right through to the top floor of this building to get done. I have to gave them credit for that because it was ripe for problems. But it never occurred.

Farley: That is quite an accomplishment that they were able to work so closely together.

Mitchell: Absolutely remarkable because this is a competitive intelligence world and everybody wants to be first on the street with the most.

Farley: Do you know whether it has changed? Because I remember General (B% Carroll) was a pretty strong man and subsequent directors of DIA were not as strong as he. Has anything changed with respect to DEFSMAC when these people came in, the successors?

Mitchell: They all pointed to it as... "Look at that. Look at this very successful cooperative effort out here." You know (1G) served their political purposes to do that or whatever. But everybody pointed at SMAC and said "Gee, why can't we all do that well?" Even CIA was initially a competitor of ours, lets be honest, was... they would point to us with a little admiration.

Farley: Good. Helen, you had a question? A follow on question.

Mitchell: I hope I am not putting to much frosting on this cake. I am very proud, very proud of what happened here.

Tucker: This follow on question came after (2-3G). (XG).

Farley: Oh. But did you get an answer?

Tucker: Yes. (2-3G).

Farley: O.K. Good. Colonel do you have any...

[redacted] Was there ever any pressure or thought given to have the analysis here within the center be a more long term analysis or was the pressure always to do immediate...

Mitchell:

Well, our directive that set us up gave us [redacted] in which to report. We would report those events and the things that occurred and make analysis [redacted] after the event. Well, describing an event was sort of difficult because it could go for years. A manned orbiting thing goes on and on for ever. But we tried to keep ourselves... We enough on our plate, lets put it that way, to do our job in the current time frame. We did not have enough time to devote ourselves to in-depth analytical work. Charlie Tevis and I after him and I believe Gordon (B% Stark) after me... Gordon (B% Stark) was a very capable guy... insisted on doing first things first and that was a current analysis job. I will say this though, I bet you... and I felt that in my day here and I would suggest that you might even feel this way now, there is no one that is as expert on the Soviet space program as a fellow by the name of [redacted]. If I had to find an analyst, back when I was here, that could give you an in depth look at their program... any where in the United States, that is the guy I would name. I believe [redacted] also fell into that category in the missile program. I don't know of anyone that I would turn to to ask a question and get a straight answer about than those two guys. So they were inclined, they wanted to do more in depth work because they had the ability and the knowledge and I guess I would say that it is sort of a shame that we could not let them do it, could not encourage it. Maybe they should have someday moved to another job to permit them to do that but of course they didn't. Do you feel that way [redacted] about those guys?

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[redacted] Yes. Absolutely.

Mitchell:

I do. Very strong, strong people. But we were not... our mission was not to go out and compete with FTD or CIA or somebody else that had that job. That is the way that we looked at it then.

[redacted] In a similar vein, a follow up question. The charter, the DOD directive actually gave some authority for control of processing as well as collection resources and as far as I know that was never exercised. Was that because of resource constraints? Actually the word processing is used in the charter and I don't know that DEFSMAC really ever got into that...

Mitchell:

Well, I think that the term processing there is used in a... would not include such things as [redacted]. I think it meant that initial messaging of the data, whatever it is, you process it in a very limited sense so that you can make that initial intelligence judgement.

[redacted] O.K. There was some of that done with [redacted]

Mitchell:

[redacted]

But that was done by the NSA elements that were here... I won't say surrounding DEFSMAC but in a sense they were. The old [redacted] what is it now? What was it when I left here?

[redacted] Well it is all now part of W1.