

A LESSON LEARNED  
By Dan McMillin

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As a Bell Labs employee working on behalf of the Navy to introduce data processing in the Evaluation Centers (EC), I tried to spend as much time in the EC as I could. It was particularly educational if I could “stand” the eve- or mid-watch and listen to the briefings at watch change over. I found that it was not only easier to move around without getting in the way but that the Navy operators were more willing to share their knowledge and relate their experiences. I guess they felt that any one dumb enough to come to San Francisco and spend their night-on-the-town in the EC needed some kind of help.

On one memorable occasion, I landed in San Francisco at 9 PM, checked into the hotel and then drove to the old Pan American Building on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay to catch the watch change over.

As I entered the EC I saw two watches grouped around a table intently studying a long strip of “dirty paper”. The OPS Boss, Don “Cliff” Clifton, hollered, “Hey McMillin, come over here. What do you make of this”? Having Cliff ask for my opinion was, to say the least, flattering.

I got my best integrating eyeball lined up and after a few minutes of study, said: “looks like a deep-draft tanker to me Cliff?”. The snickers from the group around the table were drowned out by Cliff’s, “ Aw, @\$%!!\$%\*&+@ McMillin, I told these guys that **ANYONE** could read this gram!!

Lesson: Never open your mouth when you are dealing with experts. I never learned.