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Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 Lincoln Laboratory
 Cambridge, Massachusetts

To: Dr. A. G. Hill
 From: Jay W. Forrester
 Date: May 12, 1953
 Subject: Visit to Remington Rand

The following is a description of a visit by two of our staff members to the Remington Rand office in Washington and to see the ONR Logistics computer at George Washington University.

On April 15, 1953, John D. Bassett of Division VI of the Lincoln Laboratory sent a letter to Engineering Research Associates at their Arlington, Va. office requesting permission to visit their laboratory during a week's tour to several computer sites. The purpose of the trip was twofold: (1) To provide Messrs. Bassett and Ayer, who are new on the laboratory staff, with background information in the digital computer field, and (2) to gain any information on current packaging and wiring techniques which might prove helpful in the design of WWII. Messrs. James Montgomery and William Hughes of I.B.M. accompanied the two M.I.T. engineers on the tour, but with instructions from their home office not to visit the laboratories of any I.B.M. competitors. Since the I.B.M. men did not intend to visit the E.R.A. lab, they were not mentioned in the letter referred to above. (E.R.A. is a division of Remington Rand) Dr. Engstrom of E.R.A. answered Mr. Bassett's letter the following week.

Since Dr. Engstrom's letter suggested that the Navy Logistics computer at George Washington University would be more interesting than anything at the Arlington Lab, and was Navy operated and in a non-restricted area, it was decided to request permission by telephone to bring along the I.B.M. men. On Tuesday morning, April 28th, Mr. Bassett called the Arlington Lab and spoke to Mr. H. S. Forrest to see if presence of the I.B.M. men would be appropriate. Forrest suggested that Mr. Bassett and his three companions wait for him to pick them up in the lobby of the Hay-Adams Hotel and proceed from there to George Washington University to see the computer. As Mr. Forrest was leaving the hotel with the other men, he was paged by a bell-boy and informed that he had a telephone call. The call was from Mr. Rickard of Remington Rand, who requested that Mr. Forrest bring the visitors to his office before proceeding to G.W.U. Mr. Bassett and Mr. Ayer went with Mr. Forrest to the Washington office of the Remington Rand Corporation to see Mr. Rickard. The I.B.M. men remained in the car.

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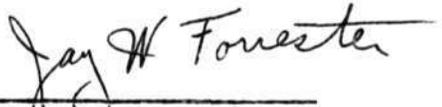
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Mr. Rickard said that he objected to the visit on security grounds, indicating that each man should have a letter referencing the WWII project number and the Air Force project number of the computer to be visited. This seemed rather odd to the M.I.T. people, since the computer to be visited was in a Navy Lab of unrestricted nature. Mr. Ayer requested and received permission to use Mr. Rickard's telephone to call Mr. John Proctor at M.I.T. for advice. Before the call was completed, Mr. Rickard made the statement that he thought Remington Rand had been given a "dirty deal" and had been "unfairly discriminated against by M.I.T." in the awarding of the contract for construction of WWII. Mr. Ayer immediately cancelled the telephone call to Mr. Proctor, since it seemed at this juncture that Mr. Rickard's objection to the computer visit involved more than a question of military security. Mr. Bassett and Mr. Ayer both refrained from comment on the WWII contract and politely took their leave. Mr. Forrest drove the men back to their hotel and took his leave with apologies for embarrassing circumstances beyond his control. Shortly afterward, a call to Mr. Ayer in the hotel room was received from the E.R.A. Lab in Arlington, informing him that the people in the Navy Lab at G.W.U. were expecting him, and that the visit to the computer could be made without E.R.A. escort. Mr. Bassett and Mr. Ayer decided to visit the Navy Lab, but the I.B.M. men felt that it would be better if they did not go, in view of the instructions they had received not to visit competitor's labs, and since Mr. Rickard seemed to imply that he considered the computer to be under direct Remington Rand jurisdiction. Messrs. Bassett and Ayer received a cordial welcome at the Navy Logistics Research Lab, and every effort was made to provide them with any desired information. Captain Ralph B. Hunt, USN Retired, was in charge of computer operations during the afternoon of the visit.

On the previous day, April 27th, all four men had gone with an engineer from the Bureau of Standards to inspect UNIVAC in the Bureau of Census. The Bureau of Standards engineer was Mr. Belcher, who had worked in the design of UNIVAC and who made arrangements by telephone for the visit. The I.B.M. men felt it was all right to visit UNIVAC because of the fact that almost any interested party may arrange to see this machine. Also, there are I.B.M. engineers working on I.B.M. machinery in the same area where UNIVAC is installed. It is possible, however, that one of the Remington Rand engineers may have reported the visit to the Washington Remington Rand office, leading to the previously recounted occurrences on the following day.

I have checked with Dr. C.V.L. Smith of ONR and Dr. Engstrom of E.R.A. The computer at George Washington University is owned by the Navy and operated by G.W.U. on ONR contract. Remington Rand has no control over it and need not have been consulted except for the courtesy of letting an E.R.A. representative describe their equipment.

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 JAV. W. Forrester
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