

3/14/58

J. O. Embry

We certainly enjoyed seeing you and your wife a few nights ago and
enjoyed the evening. While we regret that you are going to leave
us, we rather envy you the opportunity for the new experiences
which will doubtless await you.

March 14, 1958

Cordially and sincerely,

Rear Admiral Frank Akers
Memphis Naval Air Station
Memphis 15, Tennessee

Payton H. Rhodes

Dear Admiral Akers:

Dr. J. O. Embry, Professor of Romance Languages at Southwestern, has just called my attention to something that may be of interest to you, your successor, or some of your associates on the Base, and I pass along this idea to you.

You may have noted in the papers recently and in editorial comments the fact that Southwestern at Memphis is inaugurating a new language laboratory, designed not primarily for students, though this will follow, but for the use of citizens wishing to learn the elements of some of the more unusual and exotic languages for purposes of travel, study, or just their own satisfaction. Among these will be included one or more brands of Arabic, Hindi, Portuguese, Modern Hebrew, some of the Scandinavian languages, etc. A contemplated element of this, also, is making available to students from other lands who are in Memphis (there are usually about 60 connected with lumber, cotton or something) taped courses in basic English.

It was in this last connection that Professor Embry learned somewhere, possibly in Washington, of the Navy's interest in contractual relationships to provide English training for foreign personnel who might be making an extended stay at some base or other operational center. As I understand it, there are frequently received for several months missions from other countries, and that often these persons wish to perfect their English while here. Whether or not this is the case at your station, I do not know. Anyway, I am just calling to your attention this possibility for the long future and trust that you will place this letter in the hands of the proper person who will be carrying on later. I suspect that it will take us until summer to get our organization fully working; and since this is a sort of a pioneer project, not too many materials are yet available. The people at Georgetown University are the most advanced in all of this language work in the United States and have made themselves available to us for consultation and advice. We believe that we will be the only college approaching this matter from the citizen's point of view first. A number of colleges have had language laboratories, which we expect to develop also gradually, for undergraduates. At present we do what in general is considered better, namely give conversational practice to all language students by direct contact with a native speaker for two hours a week over and above all of the regular course requirements. As the number of students grows, however, we will have to use tapes and other mechanical devices.

Rear Admiral Frank Akers

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We certainly enjoyed seeing you and your wife a few nights ago and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. While we regret that you are going to leave your post here, we rather envy you the opportunity for the new experiences which will doubtless await you elsewhere.

Cordially and sincerely,

Peyton N. Rhodes

PIR:cm

b.c. - Dr. J. O. Embry