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An Expert in Counter-Intelligence

Christopher Howland Pyle

By RICHARD HALLORAN

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24—

The Army, although on the receiving end, had reason today to be proud of Christopher Howland Pyle, a former captain of military intelligence.

Mr. Pyle, 31 years old, presented to a Senate subcommittee today a 76-page report

on the Army's domestic intelligence project known as Conus Intel, or Continental United States Intelligence. It is a thoroughly prepared and, from all the evidence, highly accurate account that could have been written only by a skilled intelligence officer. The document was distilled from an 18-month, wide-ranging and painstakingly detailed counter-intelligence project organized and guided by Mr. Pyle.

Mr. Pyle first focused public attention on the Army's collection of information on political figures and organizations, primarily those opposing the war in Vietnam or involved in racial strife, with an article published in the Washington Monthly a year ago.

Provides Data to Panel

Since then, he has interviewed from 60 to 80 other former agents to gather information, has developed extensive files on Conus Intel, has become a major contact point for newsmen interested in checking on the Army's operation, has provided reams of information to the Senate subcommittee on Constitutional Rights and others on Capitol Hill, has given information to the American Civil Liberties Union for court suits, has drafted legislation intended to keep the Army out of political surveillance, and has written more articles.

Mr. Pyle says he undertook the project of exposing the Army's domestic intelligence

operation "because I came out of military intelligence realizing that they had created the apparatus of a police state."

These were well-intentioned men who were obeying orders and trying to please their superior officers, but I was worried about what other, and evil, men might do with it," he says.

"Secondly," he says, "I wanted to see if it was possible to touch the system and make it respond to resolve an issue without destroying it. So many students today are convinced that things can't be changed. I wanted to see what one individual, with no resources and living on the G.I. bill and borrowing money, could do."

Descendant of Pilgrims

Mr. Pyle says that he has tried to present the issue in Congress, the courts and the press. He says that he has not yet completely succeeded but that the odds of success have changed from 20-80 against him when he started to 70-30 for him today.

Born in Plymouth, Mass.,

on Nov. 24, 1939, Mr. Pyle is a descendant, on his mother's side, from Pilgrims who landed on the Mayflower. He studied history at Bowdoin College in Maine and received a law degree from Columbia University in 1964. Then he took a master's degree in public law and government at Columbia in 1966.

From August, 1966, to July, 1968, he was in the Army and headed the legal section in the Department of Counter-Intelligence at the Army Intelligence School at Fort Holabird, Md.

He is now studying for a doctorate in political science at Columbia and is writing his dissertation, not surprisingly, on political surveillance. He plans to teach after he receives his degree and to continue taking on public issues in the same manner in which he has gone after the Army's Conus Intel operation.

Mr. Pyle lives with his wife, the former Cynthia Fry, in a modest, book-lined apartment near the Columbia campus in New York. They have no children. Mr. Pyle is a round-faced, stocky man who

speaks softly and laughs easily. But he is persistent as a hound on the trail.

He says that, in his efforts to persuade the Army to cease its domestic intelligence activities, he has tried not to jeopardize the job or security of military intelligence agents or the legitimate functions of military intelligence. He says he has been particularly careful not to serve the interests of a foreign power by his disclosures and that no secret material has come from him.

Mr. Pyle shuns publicity and has left it to others, for the most part, to speak out publicly. He says that too much publicity would only impair his effectiveness in trying to make changes.

"Please," he often says to reporters, "don't call me the Ralph Nader of the intelligence community."



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Exposing "the apparatus of a police state"
(Mr. Pyle, at hearing, shows photo from a campus scene)