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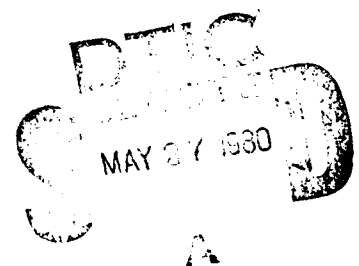
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**Symposium on the Recognition and Classification
of Aural (Non-Speech) Signals**

Final Report

April 1980

Prepared for:
Office of Naval Research
Engineering Psychology Programs



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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) A Symposium on the Recognition and Classification of Aural (Non-Speech) Signals was held at Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, between June 28 and June 30, 1978. The meetings were attended by approximately 40 participants and observers. Thirteen papers were presented by invited speakers covering the fields of human auditory perception, human visual perception, theoretical and machine approaches to pattern recog- nition, and multidimensional scaling theory.		

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*9b. The Catholic University of
America
Washington, D. C. 20064

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Report No. 4376

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE RECOGNITION AND CLASSIFICATION
OF AURAL (NON-SPEECH) SIGNALS

ONR Contract Number N00014-~~68~~⁷⁶-C-0234
Work Unit Number NR 196-154

April, 1980

Submitted by:

Dr. David J. Getty
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

Dr. James H. Howard, Jr.
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C. 20064

Submitted to:

Office of Naval Research
Engineering Psychology Programs
Code 455
Arlington, Virginia 22217

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This symposium was supported jointly by the Engineering Psychology Programs of the Office of Naval Research and by the Naval Ship Research and Development Center. We thank Dr. Martin A. Tolcott, Director of ONR's Engineering Psychology Programs, Dr. John J. O'Hare, Assistant Director of Engineering Psychology Programs, and Dr. Arthur E. Bisson of NSRDC for their encouragement and support in organizing the symposium, and for their patience through the process of publishing the volume of papers based on the conference proceedings.

We thank Dr. John A. Swets for his summary remarks and discussion of the proceedings that concluded the conference. We are grateful also to Mildred C. Webster for her resourceful management of the endless details of the conference.

The purpose of this project was to organize and conduct a symposium on the recognition and classification of complex (non-speech) auditory and visual signals. The primary objective of the symposium was to determine the current state of knowledge regarding the theory of complex signal recognition and classification, empirical tests of these theories, and significant implications of this work for applied recognition and classification systems. The meetings also served to define some of the problem areas in theory and research, and to predict promising directions for future work.

The symposium was held at Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts between June 28 and June 30 of 1978. The co-organizers of the symposium were David J. Getty of Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. and James H. Howard, Jr. of The Catholic University of America. Thirteen invited speakers participated in the meetings, covering the fields of human auditory perception, human visual perception, theoretical and machine approaches to pattern recognition and classification, and multidimensional scaling theory. The program of the symposium is given in Appendix A; a list of the attendees is given in Appendix B.

Prior to the symposium we reached an agreement with Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. that they would publish the papers presented at the meeting in a hardcover volume, tentatively entitled Auditory and Visual Pattern Recognition. In the months

following the meeting, we ultimately received manuscripts from twelve of the thirteen conference speakers. Each manuscript was reviewed and edited by Getty and Howard, as editors of the volume, and, if required, revised by its author(s). The final revisions of these manuscripts have now been sent to L. Erlbaum Associates for typesetting. Our expectation is that the volume will be released early in the fall of 1980.

The contents of the volume are summarized by the following set of chapter abstracts:

SECTION I: PERCEPTION OF COMPLEX AUDITORY PATTERNS

CHAPTER 1: Pitch Perception: An Example of Auditory Pattern Recognition

Frederick L. Wightman

Northwestern University

Modern research in psychoacoustics has provided an impressive body of data on the auditory system's response to simple stimuli such as pure tones and clicks. Of course, it has always been clear that our eventual goal is to understand the processing of more complex stimuli, such as speech and music. One important feature of many complex stimuli is that they evoke the perception of pitch. Neither the exact physical characteristics of stimuli which lead to this percept, nor the nature of the auditory processing which mediates it are known at present. The greatest challenge for theories of pitch perception is to explain the invariance of the percept. Many sounds which have very different physical features (both temporal and spectral) have the same pitch; there is clearly no simple physical correlate of the pitch percept. Modern theories treat pitch perception as a kind of auditory pattern-recognition, in which the central auditory system extracts pitch by some set of operation on "patterns" of neural activity supplied by the periphery. While the theories differ in many ways, all are remarkably successful in accounting for the empirical data and

there is little reason to favor one over another. Recent research from our laboratory on pitch perception in hearing-impaired listeners may provide critical tests of certain key features of the current theories. Our principal concern at present is the relative importance of spectral and temporal cues. It is our hope that these experiments will be revealing, about pitch perception in particular, and about auditory function in general.

CHAPTER 2: Perception of Sound Signals at Low
Signal-to-Noise Ratios

Reinier Plomp

Institute for Perception TNO

In practice sound signals to be recognized and classified are usually presented against a background of noise. The perceptual uncertainty introduced by the noise may lead to the imagined perception of signals which were actually not present. This will be explained on the basis of experiments on the perceived continuity of a tone alternated with noise, triadic comparisons of signals partly masked by noise, and the subharmonic pitches of a pure tone at low S/N ratio.

CHAPTER 3: The Role of Stimulus Uncertainty in the
Discrimination of Auditory Patterns

Charles S. Watson and William J. Kelly

Boys Town Institute for Communication Disorders
in Children,

A review of earlier research on the discrimination of simple and complex sounds, together with experiments we have conducted with tonal sequences, suggests that information may be extracted from word-length auditory patterns by application of highly efficient mechanisms of selective auditory attention, in a two-stage process. A descriptive model is proposed, according to which the first stage in the processing of word-length patterns is assumed to be a crude analysis of the overall pitch/prosody contour of the pattern. Processing within the first stage results in the assignment of a pattern to a class or subset, all of the members of which carry their identifying information at the same spectral/temporal points within the pattern. Processing within the second stage results in precise resolution of the

pattern waveform in the high-information bearing region(s). The primary limitation on the discriminability of complex auditory patterns is proposed to be that of stimulus uncertainty, which has its major effect on the first stage of the processing model.

CHAPTER 4: Meaningfulness and the Perception of
Complex Sounds

John C. Webster

Rochester Institute of Technology

In recent years, computer-aided statistical decision techniques based on electronic and/or visual analyses have proven to be powerful tools for classifying passive sonar signals. Nonetheless, they have not equalled the capabilities of the human auditory system in classifying these complex sounds. This chapter reviews the author's experimental work over a number of years on human perception of complex sounds and on the role of meaningfulness and familiarity in signal identification.

CHAPTER 5: Speech Perception and Auditory Processing

A. W. F. Huggins

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

The recognition of spoken words is perhaps our most highly developed form of auditory signal classification. A large part of this skill is dependent on the top-down processing and recoding of the input that is made possible by the involvement of language. Other contributing factors are (1) the fact that the listener himself has a vocal tract that is functionally identical to the one that produced the signal he must classify; and (2) the temporal patterning of speech, the importance of which has only recently been appreciated. Although the early stages of bottom-up processing of speech show some strong similarities to processing of non-speech signals, it is not clear to what extent useful parallels can be drawn at higher levels. This uncertainty is reflected in a current controversy in the study of speech, summarized in the question: "Is speech special?"

SECTION II: PERCEPTION OF COMPLEX VISUAL PATTERNS

CHAPTER 6: Negligible Symmetry Effects in Dot Pattern Detection

William R. Uttal and Thelma E. Tucker

University of Michigan

Both information and autocorrelation theories predict that symmetry should play a substantial role in human form perception. Though it has long been known that symmetry effects in memory studies are substantial, recent evidence suggests that they are small in detection tasks. In the present work, it is further shown that symmetry effects in a task involving dotted target detection in dotted visual noise are negligible. This finding adds further support to a multistage model of visual form perception.

CHAPTER 7: A Psychophysical Approach to Dimensional Integrality

Robert G. Pachella, Patricia Somers,
and Mary Hardzinski

University of Michigan

A theory of dimensional integrality is presented in which the critical defining characteristic of integral visual displays is the lack of correspondence between the physically defined display dimensions and the attributes of the display that can be perceived by an observer. To the extent that the physical dimensions of a display correspond to the psychological attributes, the dimensions will be separable; to the extent that they don't correspond, the dimensions will be integral. Two forms of data are presented. First, multidimensional scaling data are presented, which define these complex psychophysical mappings for various sets of stimuli. Second, reaction time data, utilizing these scaled stimuli, are presented demonstrating how this psychophysical correspondence can lead to patterns of results that had previously been associated with the issues of integrality and separability of display dimensions.

SECTION III: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PATTERN RECOGNITION

CHAPTER 8: A Feature Extraction Approach to Auditory Pattern Recognition

Julius T. Tou

University of Florida

Automatic recognition of auditory patterns is becoming a subject of considerable interest among psychologists. This chapter introduces some techniques of automatic classification and feature extraction which are applicable to auditory patterns. Cluster-seeking and feature extraction approaches are discussed. The Karhunen-Loeve expansion of auditory patterns provides a method for analysis and extraction of features. Computer techniques for feature extraction are discussed in which eigenvalues are used to represent the features. It is found that larger eigenvalues of the correlation matrix for auditory pattern vectors carry more information for discrimination of the auditory pattern.

CHAPTER 9: Pattern Recognition in Ocean Acoustics

Arthur E. Bisson

Naval Ship Research and Development Center

From childhood we are trained to recognize and identify out-of-sight events and occurrences by means of only the acoustic noise produced. The slam of a car door, footsteps in the hall, rain outside the window all can be identified by distinguishing characteristics or patterns that differentiated one sound or group of sounds from the other. How does man recognize or discriminate one sound from another? What are the basic features or characteristics of sounds that he uses to discriminate? Although questions regarding man's learning and recognition process are not easily answered, we do have at our disposal a formalism that aids to identify and utilize distinct features of sounds to classify. This formalism is called syntactic pattern recognition. This chapter is devoted to an overview of pattern recognition as it applies to the classification of acoustic sounds in the ocean.

SECTION IV: MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERCEPTUAL SPACES

CHAPTER 10: Auditory Perception: Recommendations for a
Computer Assisted Experimental Paradigm

Forrest W. Young

University of North Carolina

and

Cynthia H. Null

College of William and Mary

It is argued that understanding the perception of auditory stimuli is a necessary precursor to understanding their recognition and classification. Recommendations for a computer-assisted experimental paradigm to investigate auditory perception are presented. The recommendations focus on the use of digitized stimuli, multidimensional scaling and multi-set matching. The design should permit results which: (a) emphasize individual differences; (b) are relatively free from experimenter bias; (c) are highly replicable; and (d) are validated.

CHAPTER 11: Multidimensional Perception Spaces; Similarity
Judgment and Identification

David J. Getty, John A. Swets and Joel B. Swets

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

This chapter explores the relationship between the perceptual representation of complex stimuli and decision processes. A model of similarity-judgment and identification processes is presented that assumes (1) that complex stimuli are represented perceptually as points in a multidimensional geometric space, (2) that similarity judgments are inversely related to interstimulus distance in the perceptual space, and (3) that identification judgments are described by a probabilistic decision rule based on the pattern of interpoint distances in the perceptual space. The model is shown to accurately predict individual identification confusion matrices. The results suggest that observers' identification and similarity

judgments are based on an adaptive weighting of the perceptual dimensions. This optimization process is both stimulus and task dependent.

CHAPTER 12: Feature Selection in Auditory Perception

James H. Howard, Jr. and James A. Ballas

The Catholic University of America

Feature extraction plays an important role in theoretical accounts of auditory classification. Auditory features are generally taken to represent the "essential" perceptual elements of a complex sound. The feature selection problem concerns the definition of these basic elements. Two approaches to auditory feature selection are briefly reviewed. The results of three experiments are interpreted as supporting the more flexible of these approaches.

APPENDIX A

SYMPOSIUM ON THE RECOGNITION AND CLASSIFICATION
OF AURAL (NON-SPEECH) SIGNALS

June 28-30, 1978

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

Co-Organizers:

David J. Getty
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

James H. Howard, Jr.
The Catholic University of America

Wednesday, June 28

I. INTRODUCTION

DAVID J. GETTY
JAMES H. HOWARD, JR.

II. PERCEPTION OF COMPLEX AUDITORY PATTERNS

FREDERICK L. WIGHTMAN
(Northwestern University)

"Pitch Perception--An Example of Auditory Pattern
Recognition."

REINIER PLOMP
(Institute for Perception TNO)

"Perception of Sound Signals under Unfavorable S/N Ratios."

CHARLES S. WATSON
(Boys Town Institute for Communication Disorders
in Children)

"Physical and Psychological Factors in the Discrimination
in Word-Length Auditory Patterns."

JOHN C. WEBSTER
(Rochester Institute of Technology)

"Meaningfulness and the Perception of Complex Sounds."

A. W. F. HUGGINS
(Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.)

"Speech Perception and Auditory Processing."

Thursday, June 29

III. PERCEPTION OF COMPLEX VISUAL PATTERNS

WILLIAM R. UTTAL
(University of Michigan)

"Complexity and Symmetry Effects: Limitations of an
Autocorrelation Theory of Form Detection."

ROBERT G. PACHELLA, PATRICIA SOMERS, and MARY HARDZINSKI
(University of Michigan)

"A Psychophysical Approach to the Problem of Dimensional
Integrality."

IV. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PATTERN RECOGNITION

JULIUS T. TOU
(University of Florida)

"Feature Extraction in Auditory Pattern Recognition."

ARTHUR E. BISSON
(Naval Ship Research and Development Center)

"Overview of Importance of Automatic or Semi-Automatic/
Man-Machine Classification in the Ocean Environment."

THEODOSIOS PAVLIDIS
(Princeton University)

"Structural Pattern Recognition."

V. MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERCEPTUAL SPACES

FORREST W. YOUNG and CYNTHIA H. NULL
(University of North Carolina)

"Auditory Perception: Recommendations for a Computer-
Assisted Experimental Paradigm."

Friday, June 30

DAVID J. GETTY, JOHN A. SWETS, JOEL B. SWETS
(Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.)

"Multidimensional Perceptual Spaces Revealed by Multi-
dimensional Scaling Procedures: Fact or Fiction?"

JAMES H. HOWARD, JR., and JAMES A. BALLAS
(Catholic University)

"Feature Selection in Auditory Perception."

VI. GENERAL DISCUSSION

JOHN A. SWETS
(Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.)

Summary Remarks and Discussion

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ATTENDEES

LIST OF ATTENDEES
SYMPOSIUM ON THE RECOGNITION AND CLASSIFICATION
OF AURAL, NON-SPEECH SIGNALS

Ballas, Mr. James A.
Department of Psychology
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C. 20064

202-635-5750

Berkowitz, Dr. Sidney
David Taylor Naval Ship Research
and Development Center
Code 1824
Bethesda, Maryland 20084

202-227-1889

Bisson, Dr. Arthur E.
David W. Taylor Naval Ship Research
and Development Center
Code 1939
Bethesda, Maryland 20084

202- 227-1322

Blizard, Mr. Marvin A.
Office of Naval Research
Code 222
800 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, Virginia 22217

202-696-4207

Braida, Dr. Louis D.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
36-747
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

617-253-2575

Burgy, Dr. Donald C.
Department of Psychology
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C. 20064

202-635-5750

Colburn, Mr. H. Steven
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Room 36-759
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

617-253-2575

Durlack, Mr. Nathaniel
Massachusetts Institute of Tecchnology
Room 36-709
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

617-253-2534

Getty, Dr. David J.
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

617-491-1850

Green, Dr. David M.
Department of Psychology and Social Relations
Harvard University
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

617-495-3855

Harris, Dr. J. D.
Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory
Submarine Base
Groton, Connecticut 06340

203-449-3201

Howard, Dr. James A., Jr.
Department of Psychology
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C. 20064

202-635-5750

Huggins, Dr. A. W. F.
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

617-491-1850

Jones, Dr. Michael
E.G. and G.
Suite 211
8807 Sudley Road
Manassas, Virginia 22110

703-361-5166

Kadane, Dr. James
NOSC
Post Office Box 997
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

808-254-4323

Kerivan, Dr. Jack
Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory
Auditory Division
Groton, Connecticut 06340

203-449-3201

Kinney, Dr. JoAnn
Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory
Post Office Box 900
Submarine Base
Groton, Connecticut 06340

203-449-3867

O'Hare, Dr. John Jr.
Office of Naval Research
Code 455
800 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, Virginia 22217

202-696-4507

Pachella, Dr. Robert G.
Human Performance Center
University of Michigan
330 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

313-764-9440

Pavlidis, Dr. Theodosios
Department of Electrical Engineering
and Computer Science
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

609-452-4620

Plomp, Dr. Reinier
Institute for Perception TNO
Kampweg 5, Soesterberg
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

03463-14444

Robinson, Dr. William
Naval Underwater Systems Center
Fort Trumbull
Code 411
New London, Connecticut 06320

203-442-0771

Rogowitz, Dr. Bernice F.
Harvard University
906 William James Hall
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

617-495-3859

Russotti, Dr. Joseph
Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory
Auditory Division
Box 900
Groton, Connecticut 06340

203-449-3201

Spiegel, Dr. Murray F.
Laboratory of Psychophysics
Harvard University
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

617-495-3859

Stephens, Dr. William E.
2150 Fields Road
Rockville, Maryland 20850

703-367-2886

Swets, Mr. Joel B.
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

617-491-1850

Swets, Dr. John A.
Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

617-491-1850

Tou, Dr. Julius T.
Center for Information Research
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611

904-392-0920

Uttal, Dr. William R.
University of Michigan
3009 ISR
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

313-764-9398

Watson, Dr. Charles S.
The Boys Town Institute for Communication
Disorders in Children
555 N. 30th Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68131

402-449-6500

Webster, Dr. John C.
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Audiology Department
Rochester Institute of Technology
One Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623

716-475-6292

Wightman, Dr. Frederick L.
Department of Communicative Disorders
Northwestern University
2299 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois 60201

312-492-3180

Young, Dr. Forrest W.
Thurstone Psychometric Laboratory
Davie Hall 013-A
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

919-933-5036

Zurek, Dr. Patrick M.
Central Institute for the Deaf
909 S. Taylor
St. Louis, Missouri 63110

314-652-3200

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CDR Paul R. Chatelier
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of Defense
OUSDRE (E&LS)
Pentagon, Room 3D129
Washington, D. C. 20301

Department of the Navy

Director
Engineering Psychology Programs
Code 455
Office of Naval Research
800 North Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217 (5 cys)

Director
Acoustic Technology Programs
Code 222
Office of Naval Research
800 North Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217

Director
Statistics and Probability Program
Code 436
Office of Naval Research
800 North Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217

Director
Physiology Program
Code 441
Office of Naval Research
800 North Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217

Commanding Officer
ONR Branch Office
ATTN: Dr. J. Lester
Building 114, Section D
666 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210

Department of the Navy

Dr. Robert G. Smith
Office of the Chief of Naval
Operations, OP987H
Personnel Logistics Plans
Washington, D. C. 20350

Dr. Jerry C. Lamb
Display Branch
Code TD112
Naval Underwater Systems Center
New Longon, CT 06320

Naval Training Equipment Center
ATTN: Technical Library
Orlando, FL 32813

Human Factors Department
Code N215
Naval Training Equipment Center
Orlando, FL 32813

Dr. Alfred F. Smode
Training Analysis and Evaluation
Group
Naval Training Equipment center
Code N-00T
Orlando, FL 32813

CDR R. Gibson
Bureau of Medicine & Surgery
Aerospace Psychology Branch
Code 513
Washington, D. C. 20372

CDR Robert Biersner
Naval Medical R&D Command
Code 44
Naval Medical Center
Bethesda, MD 20014

Dr. Arthur Bachrach
Behavioral Sciences Department
Naval Medical Research Institute
Bethesda, MD 20014

455:ECG:716:abc
78u455-847

Department of the Navy

Dr. George Moeller
Human Factors Engineering Branch
Submarine Medical Research Lab
Naval Submarine Base
Groton, CT 06340

Head
Aerospace Psychology Department
Code L5
Naval Aerospace Medical Research Lab
Pensacola, FL 32508

Commanding Officer
Naval Health Research Center
San Diego, CA 92152

Navy Personnel Research and
Development Center
Manned Systems Design
Code 311
San Diego, CA 92152

Navy Personnel Research and
Development Center
Code 305
San Diego, CA 92152

Navy Personnel Research and
Development Center
Management Support Department
Code 210
San Diego, CA 92152

CDR P. M. Curran
Code 604
Human Factors Engineering Division
Naval Air Development Center
Warminster, PA 18974

Mr. Ronald A. Erickson
Human Factors Branch
Code 3194
Naval Weapons Center
China Lake, CA 93555

Human Factors Engineering Branch
Code 1226
Pacific Missile Test Center
Point Mugu, CA 93042

Department of the Navy

Mr. J. Williams
Department of Environmental
Sciences
U. S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402

Dr. Gary Poock
Operations Research Department
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93940

Dean of Research Administration
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93940

Mr. H. Talkington
Ocean Engineering Department
Naval Ocean Systems Center
San Diego, CA 92152

Mr. Paul Heckman
Naval Ocean Systems Center
San Diego, CA 92152

Mr. Warren Lewis
Human Engineering Branch
Code 8231
Naval Ocean Systems Center
San Diego, CA 92152

Dr. Robert French
Naval Ocean Systems Center
San Diego, CA 92152

Dr. Ross L. Pepper
Naval Ocean Systems Center
Hawaii Laboratory
Post Office Box 997
Kailua, HI 96734

Dr. A. L. Slafkosky
Scientific Advisor
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Code RD-1
Washington, D. C. 20380

Mr. Arnold Rubinstein
Naval Material Command
NAVMAT 08D22
Washington, D. C. 20360

Department of the Navy

Commander
Naval Air Systems Command
Human Factors Programs
NAVAIR 340F
Washington, D. C. 20361

Commander
Naval Air Systems Command
Crew Station Design
NAVAIR 5313
Washington, D. C. 20361

Mr. Phillip Andrews
Naval Sea Systems Command
NAVSEA 0341
Washington, D. C. 20362

Naval Sea Systems Command
Personnel & Training Analyses Office
NAVSEA 074C1
Washington, D. C. 20362

Commander
Naval Electronics Systems Command
Human Factors Engineering Branch
Code 4701
Washington, D. C. 20360

LCOL B. Hastings
Marine Corps Liaison Officer
Naval Coastal Systems Center
Panama City, FL 32407

Dr. Arthur E. Bisson
Code 1939
NSRDC
Carderock, MD 20084

Dr. Frederick Ball
Naval Underwater Systems Center
New London, CT 06320

Human Factor Section
Systems Engineering Test
Directorate
U.S. Naval Air Test Center
Patuxent River, MD 20670

Human Factor Engineering Branch
Naval Ship Research & Development
Center, Annapolis Division
Annapolis, MD 21402

Department of the Navy

Mr. John Quirk
Naval Coastal Systems Laboratory
Code 712
Panama City, FL 32401

LCDR W. Moroney
Code 55MP
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93940

Mr. Merlin Malehorn
Office of the Chief of Naval
Operations (OP 102)
Washington, D. C. 20350

Commanding Officer
ONR Branch Office
ATTN: Dr. C. Davis
536 South Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60605

Commanding Officer
ONR Branch Office
ATTN: Dr. E. Gloye
1030 East Green Street
Pasadena, CA 91106

Office of Naval Research
Scientific Liaison Group
American Embassy
Room A-407
APO, San Francisco, CA 96503

Director
Naval Research Laboratory
Technical Information Division
Code 2627
Washington, D. C. 20375 (6 cys)

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Department of the Army

Mr. J. Barber
HQ5, Department of the Army
DAPE-MBR
Washington, D. C. 20310

Dr. Joseph Zeidner
Technical Director
U.S. Army Research Institute
5001 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22333

Director, Organizations and
Systems Research Laboratory
U. S. Army Research Institute
5001 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22333

Technical Director
U. S. Army Human Engineering Labs
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21005

U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Lab
ATTN: CPT Gerald P. Kreuger
Ft. Rucker, AL 36362

Department of the Air Force

U.S. Air Force Office of
Scientific Research
Life Sciences Directorate, NL
Bolling Air Force Base
Washington, D. C. 20332

Dr. Donald A. Topmiller
Chief,
Systems Engineering Branch
Human Engineering Division
USAF AMRL/HES
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433

Air University Library
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112

Dr. Gordon Eckstrand
AFHRL/ASM
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433

Other Organizations

Human Resources Research Office
300 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dr. Jesse Orlansky
Institute for Defense Analyses
400 Army-Navy Drive
Arlington, VA 22202

Dr. Arthur I. Siegel
Applied Psychological Services, Inc.
404 East Lancaster Street
Wayne, PA 19087

Dr. Harry Snyder
Department of Industrial Engineering
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Dr. W. S. Vaughan
Oceanautics, Inc.
422 6th Street
Annapolis, MD 21403

Dr. Gershon Weltman
Perceptronics, Inc.
6271 Variel Avenue
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Dr. Robert Williges
Human Factors Laboratory
Virginia Polytechnical Institute
and State University
130 Whittemore Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Dr. Alphonse Chapanis
Department of Psychology
The Johns Hopkins University
Charles and 34th Streets
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dr. James H. Howard, Jr.
Department of Psychology
Catholic University
Washington, D. C. 20064

Other Government Agencies

Defense Documentation Center
Cameron Station, Bldg. 5
Alexandria, VA 22314 (12 cys)

Dr. Stephen J. Andriole
Director
Cybernetics Technology Office
Defense Advanced Research Projects
Agency
1400 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209

Other Organizations

Dr. Stanley Deutsch
Office of Life Sciences
National Aeronautics and Space
Administration
600 Independence Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20546

Dr. J. Miller
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
11400 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dr. Robert R. Mackie
Human Factors Research, Inc.
5775 Dawson Avenue
Goleta, CA 93017