

MAY 15 1966

Set-In at the OSS

The scene was the Washington headquarters of the OSS during World War II.

A statuesque blonde kept noticing a forlorn young man with a lost soul expression on his face sitting outside her office door every time she stepped into the corridor.

Days went by. Every morning he showed up to keep his silent vigil. People trained to mind their own business pretended not to notice him.

Everyone but the blonde. Finally, she inquired:

"Are you waiting for someone?"

"No," he replied.

"Do you intend to sit out the war here?" she asked.

"Probably," he said.

The man was New Yorker cartoonist Saul Steinberg, who has just been named the Smithsonian's first artist in residence.

The damsel was internationally-known Georgetownner, Kay Halle.

Steinberg, a Navy explosives expert who trained Chinese guerrillas to blow up bridges, had been recruited for the OSS by Maj. Gen. William "Wild Bill" Donovan.

But Donovan had promptly forgotten requesting the transfer. Steinberg might have stayed lost in limbo a lot longer if Kay Halle hadn't become aware of the snafu.

They became close friends and she an admirer of his artistic talents, which were utilized by the OSS for clandestine overseas newspapers dropped behind enemy lines.

Convinced of Steinberg's genius before the rest of the world recognized it, Kay Halle systematically retrieved his propaganda sketches from wastebaskets all the time they worked together. At the war's end, she had them photostated for the National Archives, but kept the originals in a bound volume.

Now she has offered the drawings to the Smithsonian for an intended exhibition of Steinberg's work next year. The gesture seems to her particularly appropriate since Secretary Dillon Ripley who hired Steinberg, is also an alumni of the OSS.