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HEADQUARTERS  
 UNITED STATES FORCES  
 INDIA-BURMA THEATER  
 Office of the Inspector General

333.5

APO 885  
 23 May 1946

SUBJECT: Loss of Registered Cryptographic Documents.

TO: Commanding General, United States Forces,  
 India-Burma Theater, APO 885.

B-53 Testimony of Lt. Col. Thomas R. Chittenden, 582-590 3923-3931  
 Military Intelligence, Washington, D. C.

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Testimony of Lt Col Thomas R. Chittenden, Military Intelligence, taken at Washington, D. C., on 3 April 1946, by Colonel William H. Obenour, IGD.

The witness was sworn.

- 3923 Q Please state your name, serial number, rank, organization, station and duty assignment.  
 A Thomas R. Chittenden, Lieutenant Colonel, Military Intelligence, O-417576. Present duty assignment is on terminal leave from Camp Beale, California, in connection with separation from the service. At present I am a civilian research analyst, Army Security Agency, Arlington Virginia. Present address, 227 North Piedmont Street, Arlington, Virginia.
- 3924 Q Are you familiar with your rights as a witness in an investigation of this kind under the 24th Article of War?  
 A Yes, sir.
- 3925 Q In connection with the investigation of certain losses or failure to account for cryptographic documents in the India-Burma Theater it has been alleged that Army Regulations 380-5 do not in all cases apply to the government of operations in a sub-office of record such as the India-Burma Theater Headquarters. Will you please discuss in what respects Army Regulations 380-5 do not apply or can not be applied to the administration of secret cryptographic documents in a sub-office of record?

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A In the first place, I don't think anyone is at liberty to say that the Army regulations do not apply because they are the regulations under which we must live and operate. As to their workability, which I believe is the essence of your question, if we attempted to live by the letter of AR 380-5 and at the same time carry on efficient cryptographic functions, we could not do so because AR 380-5 is inadequate as an instruction. It is, I suppose like all Army Regulations, intended merely to serve as a guide. At least we have operated under that interpretation or belief for several years, because we have found it necessary to issue, in the form of Adjutant General's Office letters, instructions in detail to the field. We have found it necessary to publish, under the authority given us as the agency to issue cryptographic material, detailed instructions for issuing it, handling it and accounting for it either in the form of such documents as SIGINFO or SIGPLAN, the basic cryptographic publication. Therefore, AR 380-5 has been sort of a foundation on which we have built our regulations. As brought out in earlier testimony, an attempt was made two years ago to get a specific regulation covering cryptographic accounting and distribution. Rather, let me go back a moment. The regulation is going to cover cryptographic security, and as a portion of this regulation there would be a chapter on distribution and accounting, and this would be an Army Regulation which would be written by the agencies having the knowledge on how to do the work, and people would be expected to live not only by the spirit but also by the letter of this regulation. No such thing exists. It was in draft form. Where it was killed, I don't know, but it was not approved by the War Department. We have found it necessary in the branch in which we worked here, which has undergone several reorganizations -- We always refer to it as C Branch -- to make attempts from time to time to again correct this situation which we know exists. For example, I went on some temporary duty to Pacific Ocean areas and Hawaii in September of 1944 in connection with accounting problems there. They were getting into the same situation there which apparently the India-Burma Theater finds itself in now. The volume of material was becoming extremely heavy and people were untrained for the job. They realized, however, that serious results would be forthcoming if they did not get some immediate help from the office that knew how to help them. So I was sent out there to see what the situation was and make recommendations. We helped them with some immediate problems, but the report also contained -- which I wrote -- an expression of opinion that it was necessary for the War Department to standardize its accounting procedures in the cryptographic field. We attempted to set up a standardization or standard situation for all of the Pacific Ocean

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areas. I drafted an accounting manual of a sort for them. It was just a brief one. I left it with them to use as a guide. We also were going to standardize the forms that they used, the manner of usage of these forms, so that a sub-office of record would, in effect, become an overseas extension of this accounting office. We ran into practical difficulties in putting that into effect because we could not supply them with the materials that they needed. We are using here a system of accounting involving Linex, which is fairly expensive to establish but once established is inexpensive and extremely efficient and accurate, simple to operate and simple to train people to use. We wanted to extend that to them and that was killed here in the agency. So that is just one example of our efforts to standardize this, to bring to the field a practical means of living by AR 380-5.

- 3926 Q Most of the shortages appear to have resulted in the India-Burma Theater from mass destructions which took place between VJ Day and 15 January 1946, during which time personnel who were unfamiliar with the significance of cryptographic documents and the finality of their destruction destroyed documents and failed to keep proper records. Do you believe that if the practice of permitting noncommissioned officers not only to supervise but to execute these destructions constituted a departure from AR 380-5 under the circumstances that exist in a sub-office of record?
- A Well, I can imagine circumstances which could exist in the sub-office of record, since we are speaking of a particular sub-office of record and particular individuals involved. I am unqualified to say whether the conditions warranted it or not. To answer the first part of your question, however, as to whether I believe that in general enlisted personnel should carry out the destruction, including the supervision of it, I do not. I believe that AR 380-5 is adequate on that point. It is appreciated that all offices do not have at all times sufficient officers to actually perform all the tasks to which they are assigned. You are familiar with the old phrase "in addition to your other duties." Everybody has been heavily laden during the war with duties which they could not hope personally to perform. However, in a sub-office of record such as a theater they should be able to afford officer personnel. The importance of the destruction of cryptographic material, because of its very finality and the serious consequences which can arise in the future if your memory fails and you have not prepared an adequate record would, it seems to me, always warrant, if the people were fully cognizant of the importance of that task, would always warrant the assignment of an officer at least for the time of the actual destruction and the assignment of an officer to plan and prepare the destruction if he is not able to actually feed them into the furnace. That isn't necessary. But the

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establishment of a system of checking and doublechecking, of safeguarding until the moment of destruction, and of certifying that the destruction was carried out under adequate supervision seems to me to be the responsibility of an officer at least in the sub-office of record. Just whom you are going to saddle with that task is a matter for the moment. But again it is a matter of appreciation; if the people do not appreciate what they are doing at that moment, what they are letting themselves in for if it isn't properly handled, then nature takes its course and they may not have an officer do it. The regulation, however, does not permit any deviation from that and I don't believe that the circumstances are very common in which an officer could not at least supervise.

- 3927 Q The facts in this case seem to indicate that a certain amount of negligence has resulted in the inability of the theater to definitely account for several hundreds of documents; although it appears that these documents were destroyed, there is no factual basis upon which such a conclusion can be reached. Will you please discuss for the record the position that this condition places the War Department in and its significance with respect to the present and future administration of the future cryptograph systems employed by the War Department and the administrative and disciplinary control visualized by the War Department?
- A First I will answer the specific question about India-Burma and the seriousness of what has happened there with respect to our cryptographic systems. I understood that as one expression you would like to have.

- 3928 Q Yes.
- A With the exception of a few basic instructional documents which are on the list which was read into the record this morning, the loss of the documents generally is of little value now to the War Department. The documents generally were the type which have a short life, both in their own importance, that is, the necessity for guarding them, and in the type of traffic which they carry and the necessity for guarding the information passed in it. I can recall no documents there which carried planning traffic or anything of a diplomatic nature which could result in considerable embarrassment to the War Department and the Government as a whole. Fortunately, most of them were purely local systems and I would imagine carried purely local traffic having to do with matters of the day. Therefore, with the exception of these basic documents such as KKK, which is an extremely grave loss because it reveals the wiring plan and the operation of the most valuable cryptographic device, it is not of too serious consequence, item by item. As to the implications of the loss of such a quantity of documents, it is very serious,

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in my opinion, and is the highlight of a situation which has been growing and which was perhaps inevitable because of, as I spoke earlier, the inability of the War Department to standardize its cryptographic accounting methods in such a manner that would make them necessary to follow, in other words, as a regulation or as an order. You spoke of expense to the War Department. It can incur considerable expense if the condition under which this arose is permitted to continue. I doubt — and this is not criticism aimed at any particular party — but I doubt if the same thing could have arisen in the Navy Department for this reason: Cryptographic equipment, cryptographic communications, are considered apparently to be more important, are considered to be on a higher level than they are in the War Department. When you consider the placement of this organization in the War Department at the beginning of the war and during most of the war, you can appreciate what I mean there when I say that. We were — reading from the Secretary of War to the Army Service Forces to the Chief Signal Officer to the Army Communications Service to the Signal Security Branch. There is where we stood. By comparison in the Navy Department, the Director of Naval Communications operates directly under the Chief of Naval Operations, and the man or the office handling registered publications and cryptographic work is directly responsible to the Director of Naval Communications. In other words, it is on a high administrative level there. What this means in effect then is that regulations which are necessary to promote efficient operations, instructions which must have a mandatory meaning to them, can be gotten out with a minimum amount of interdepartmental handling with loss of time. The Director of Naval Communications, as I understand it, has authority to send out what amount to regulations covering communications in the Navy Department. The cryptographic office has only to go next door literally to see that their own functions are put into regulation form and it is carried out. As to the comparative efficiency of the Navy Department and the War Department in actually following these functions, no one can say. We think that we have here a better accounting system actually for watching cryptographic documents than they have. We know that we are not three months behind.

In my opinion, the people who are involved in this investigation of loss of or improper accounting are themselves victims of circumstance because during the war it was my experience that from the time of the beginning

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of the war the emphasis was immediately upon the production and distribution of the cryptographic material; to get it as rapidly as possible from the producing agency to the hand of the user. Finally, it was my experience that in the field cryptographic material was looked upon by many communications officers as a necessary evil. It was a detriment to speedy communication; it required additional personnel; it was for the most part new in the volume and the scope and the restrictions which accompanied it to most of the communications officers, even though they may have been in the Army for many years previously, because cryptographic communications became 95 per cent — estimated — of the communications of the Army, and the materials with which these communications were handled were produced primarily by this agency in such haste and under such pressure that always we were aiming at production, at improvement, and at improving communications by improving cryptographic material and improving getting it out to the field. The emphasis here was not on accounting, and the people who had experience here and who later went to theaters were not schooled in the accounting to the extent that they were schooled in the use of the systems in primary security measures, in distribution.

- 3929 Q Are you familiar with the type of orientation and briefing given Lieutenant Will while he was in this office just prior to his departure for overseas?  
A I am not familiar with the case of Lieutenant Will. What date did he go overseas?
- 3930 Q Lieutenant Will went overseas in February 1945.  
A I can answer it generally because at that time we had become rather accustomed to having officers come through here for brief periods of training and we had set up courses of training in C Branch. They followed a definite pattern and, depending on the amount of time they had to spend and depending upon the knowledge they had of their assignment, we trained them accordingly. If they were going out to work in the distribution office, they received primary training in distribution; if they were going to work in accounting, they received training there; if they were deciphering machine repairmen, the training was there. Oftentimes the training was sketchy because the men themselves did not know to which theater they were going. They did not know the jobs they would get when they got there. Furthermore, we had experiences in which thoroughly trained men, both enlisted men and officers, were sent from here and were immediately

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assigned, upon entry into the theater, in other positions. Some of them were rescued and brought back into the cryptographic fold, but they were a total loss to us as far as having trained people in theater.

3931 Q Have you anything further you would like to add to the testimony you have given in this case?

A No, sir.

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