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Censorship

Extract from

FINAL REPORT OF G-2-D, G.H.Q., A.E.F., May 1, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION.

The fourth sub-section of the Intelligence Section of the General Staff of the A.E.F. (G-2-D, G.H.Q.) was charged, during the war, with the executive direction of postal, telegraphic and telephonic censorship of the American Expeditionary Forces; with the handling of press correspondents, accredited and visiting, and the censorship of their telegrams and mail articles; with liaison press censorship with the French authorities; with propaganda of the American army, which included direct propaganda over the enemy lines, liaison with the Committee on Public Information (which was charged with propaganda in neutral countries) and the organization and supervision of "The Stars and Stripes", the official paper of the American Expeditionary Forces. To this sub-section was also assigned a photographic sub-division, whose duties were the taking of photographs and films for historical purposes, the censorship of official photographs and photographs taken by newspaper correspondents, and the titling of official photographs and films; to the fourth sub-section was also assigned the care and the incidental supervision of the work of the eight official artists of the American Expeditionary Forces.

During the war, G-2-D, through its field press headquarters and press conducting officers, was largely responsible for the transportation and entertainment of official visitors to the American army in France. After the signing of the armistice, the Visitors' Bureau was made a separate sub-section of the Intelligence Section (G-2-E), and its work became more important and on a greater scale. No attempt is made in this report to cover the activities of G-2-D in the entertainment of official visitors, that feature being fully covered in the final report of G-2-E.

The formal organization of G-2-D began shortly after the installation of American Headquarters at Chaumont (Haute Marne). France on September 1, 1917. Prior to that time, field press headquarters and press censorship had been installed by Major (Lieutenant Colonel) Frederick Palmer, and base censorship by Major (Colonel) W. F. Creary, both under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel (Brigadier General) D. E. Nolan, A.C. of S., G-2, G.H.Q., A.E.F.

The first Chief of G-2-D, maintaining an executive office at Chaumont, in charge of these various activities, was Lieutenant Colonel (Colonel) Walter C. Sweeney, G.S. Colonel Sweeney was assigned to G-2, G.H.Q., in August 1917. He was Chief of G-2-D until June 18, 1918, when he was assigned to duty at the Army Staff College, Langres, later becoming

Chief of Staff of the 28th Division.

Colonel Sweeney had as his chief press officer, during the months immediately preceding his transfer to other work, Major (Colonel) E. R. W. McCabe, G.S. Colonel McCabe became Chief of G-2-D upon the assignment of Colonel Sweeney to duty at the Army G-2-D upon the assignment of Colonel Sweeney to duty at the Army Staff College on June 18, 1918 and continued as Chief, G-2-D until August 23, 1918, when he was assigned to duty with the 151st Field Artillery Brigade.

Major Alexander L. James, Jr., G.S., was assigned to duty with G-2, G.H.Q., A.E.F. on May 9, 1918. His first duty was that of press officer and liaison officer of G-2-D with the Committee on Public Information, Paris. Major James became Chief of G-2-D upon the assignment of Colonel McCabe to other duty, and continued in this capacity until December 10, 1918, when he was relieved from duty because of ill health. Major James returned to the United States January 2, 1919.

Captain Donald L. Stone, U.S.A., formerly chief press censor in Paris, came to Chaumont, as Assistant Chief, G-2-D, on October 15, 1918, to replace temporarily Captain Mark S. Watson, F.A., who had been, for the past year, Assistant Chief and Executive Officer of G-2-D, through the administrations of Colonel Sweeney, Colonel McCabe and Major James, and who was, under the policy of the Section, ordered to the front with the Artillery Headquarters of the 28th Division for a period of active duty. After the signing of the armistice, Captain Watson became acting officer in charge of "The Stars and Stripes" and later officer in charge. After the return of Major James to the United States, Captain Stone became Acting Chief of G-2-D.

The personnel and administrative officers of G-2-D on duty in Chaumont were 1st Lieut. Harlow Bristol, Inf. (June 1918 - Jan. 1919) and 2nd Lieut. Everett F. McCoy, F.A., formerly of 151st F.A., (Jan. 1919 -).

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I. Censorship.

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II.

REPORT FROM LABORATORY, BASE CENSOR'S OFFICE.

Relatively few attempts at conveying military information for use of the enemy have been found but many attempts on the part of soldiers to convey forbidden information for the satisfaction of their friends and relatives at home have been discovered. This information is usually in the form of the location of the writer: the troops near him; and where he is to go and ordinarily is in some form of an easily detected code. In some instances this information has been conveyed by the use of invisible inks. In these cases and in all others involving violations of censorship regulations, disciplinary action has been instituted by the Base Censor, the matter in question being taken up with the soldier's immediate or higher commander, or through the Adjutant General's Office if the seriousness of the case seemed to warrant it.

Plans for establishing a chemical laboratory at the Base Censor's office in Paris for the purpose of examining mail for secret writing materialized July 11, 1918 when Lucien J. Desha, Captain, Sanitary Corps reported to establish such a laboratory and take charge of the work. The laboratory began to function on September 23, 1918, the time previous to this having been spent in gathering equipment and experimental work. The first work was done by Captain Desha and four enlisted men.

In August 1918 a request was sent to Washington for four trained chemists to do experimental work. First Lieutenants G. C. Chandlee, last in charge of the work, and D. F. J. Lynch were trained in the ink laboratory in Washington and after spending a week in the British laboratory in London, reported for duty at the Base Censor's Office November 4, 1918. Second Lieutenants P. S. Danner and Edward F. Snyder reported direct from the Washington laboratory to the Base Censor November 13, 1918.

The chemical methods employed for the testing of mail for secret writing are those given in the British Secret Report on this subject. A close relation was early established between the Military Intelligence Division of the United States Army and the branches of the British Postal Censorship doing similar work.

The mail examined at the American laboratory in Paris for secret writing was that going from members of the A.E.F. chiefly to neutral countries. When the Army of Occupation entered Luxemburg and Germany, a number of letters

coming from the different divisions in the army were tested each day. From September 23, 1918 to February 8, 1919 the date of the tentative closing of the laboratory, a total of 53,658 letters was examined for secret writing. Of this number 428 reacted in such manner as to require further examination but only two letters were found to contain secret writing. These were from a private in the U.S. army to relatives in Italy.

The examination of mail for secret writing was discontinued February 8, 1919.