

March 21, 1922.

My dear Major Churchill:

With reference to your note, received here the 13th instant, regarding the question of a distinguished service medal for Colonel George Fabyan, I am unable to locate anything from you.

The only information found in our files regarding the matter is that contained in the letter from this office, May 7, 1920, to Colonel Fabyan, copy enclosed.

Very truly yours,

George O. Squier,  
Major General,  
Chief Signal Officer of the Army.

1 Incl.

Major Marlborough Churchill,  
Military Intelligence Division,  
General Staff.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER,

IN REPLY  
REFER TOWASHINGTON  
SMV-81

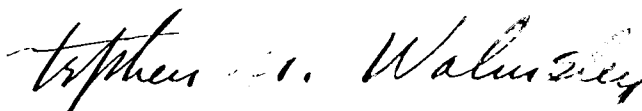
March 14, 1923.

Subject: Distinguished Service Medal.

To: Major Joseph O. Auborgne, Hdqrs. 6th Corps Area, 1819 W. Pershing Rd.  
Chicago, Illinois.

1. The fixing of April 7th, 1923, as the time limit on the awarding of decorations for service performed during the recent war, has brought to the attention of the Chief Signal Officer, the desirability of considering the question as to whether or not there are members of the Signal Corps who have not received an award of the Distinguished Service Medal to which they are justly entitled. He has therefore directed me to request you to submit as soon as possible the names with any attendant details which may be at your disposal of any Signal Corps officers whom you consider were overlooked in the matter of decorations. It will be greatly appreciated if you will consider this matter at once and forward to this office any views which you may have in the matter.

By order of the Chief Signal Officer.


Stephen H. Walmsley,  
Major, Signal Corps.

1st Ind.

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Hq. 6th C.A., O.Sig.O., 1819 W. Pershing Rd., Chicago, Ill., March 21, 1923. - To the C.S.O. of the Army, Washington, D.C.

1. I can submit no names of Signal Corps officers whom I consider eligible for the Distinguished Service Medal.

2. In connection with the award of the Distinguished Service Medal, however, it is believed that action should be taken without delay by the Chief Signal Officer in the case of Colonel George Fabyan of Geneva, Illinois, whose patriotic expenditure of money and the time of his establishment at Geneva, Illinois, during the war, in my estimation,

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merits the award of the Distinguished Service Medal.

3. During my incumbency in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, I at one time started a recommendation for securing the Distinguished Service Medal for Colonel George Fabyan. The papers should be somewhere in the files of the Engineering & Research Division, if not in the main files. Negotiations for the recommendation had proceeded to the following point: Several letters were exchanged between myself, representing the Chief Signal Officer of the Army, and the then Chief of the Military Intelligence Section of the General Staff, Colonel Van Deman, who had been materially assisted by the work of Colonel Fabyan's cipher bureau. The outcome was that the Chief of Military Intelligence said that if the Chief Signal Officer of the Army would initiate the recommendation to The Adjutant General, he would more than gladly indorse such recommendation for the award of the Distinguished Service Medal to Colonel Fabyan. The matter hung fire in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer for some time, although General Squier seemed to be satisfied to make the recommendation. About that time, however, the time limit for filing claims, then in operation, was closed, and the recommendation failed to reach the General Staff.

4. I understand that some time recently a search was made in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer for papers bearing on this subject, but that the search was unsuccessful. This I cannot understand, because to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the papers in the case were in the office safe of the Chief of the Engineering & Research Division. Even the form of citation had been worked up and was agreeable to the Chief of the Military Intelligence.

5. There is on file in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer a letter of commendation written by General Squier sometime in 1920 or 1921, which he personally gave to Colonel Fabyan as a token of appreciation of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer for the services rendered to his office during the war. The essence of this letter might be used in the recommendation for the Distinguished Service Medal, if approved by the Chief Signal Officer. Inasmuch as the services rendered by Colonel Fabyan's cipher laboratories were rendered to more than one part of the Government, namely, both the Signal Corps and the Military Intelligence of the War Department, the Naval Communications Service of the Navy Department, and to the State Department, as well as to the Department of Justice, it is felt that no mistake will be made in giving the recommendation the broadest possible form, so as to indicate the national character of the distinguished services rendered by Colonel Fabyan.

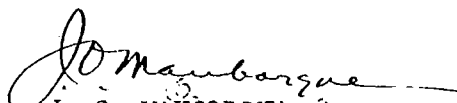
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6. The facts on which the recommendation should be based are as follows: Colonel Fabyan, at the outbreak of the war, had a cipher laboratory established (which he rapidly expanded), and took over for the United States Government and the various Departments just mentioned, the "breaking" of codes and ciphers concerned not only with the operation of German spies in this country but also the Mexican operations. His Cipher Bureau "broke" many messages of great importance to the various Departments in Washington at a cost of absolutely zero to the Government, the whole burden of the expense of maintaining a cipher laboratory, the pay of the employees, their housing, and all other expense being borne by Colonel Fabyan. In addition, Colonel Fabyan proposed to the War Department, and had accepted by the Chief Signal Officer, the proposition of sending to Geneva, Illinois, to Colonel Fabyan's laboratory, a number of selected Signal Corps officers and men for training in cipher work. A very successful course was given by Colonel Fabyan's operatives to the selected Signal Corps personnel, at a considerable expense to Colonel Fabyan. The volume of work done by his cipher laboratory was tremendous, and his only recompense has been a letter of commendation from the Chief Signal Officer of the Army.

7. I recommend that the recommendation for the Distinguished Service Medal be put in shape and be submitted without delay to Major Ralph Van Deman, former Chief of the Military Intelligence, as well as to the present Department of Military Intelligence, for indorsement and concurrence.

8. It may be argued that Colonel Fabyan does not deserve this medal on account of the fact that it was his employees who did the work, but this view does not recognize the part played by Colonel Fabyan in the expenditure of money and time in the organization of his bureau, and in a thousand other ways, which places the credit for his success on his own shoulders.

9. If any further data is required from me with reference to this recommendation, I shall be glad to forward it without delay.

  
J. O. MAUBORGNE,  
Signal Officer.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

In replying refer to

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WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTONRECEIVED  
March 8, 1920 MAR 13 AM 9 13OFFICE  
CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICERMajor General G. O. Squier,  
Chief Signal Officer,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear General Squier:

I am under the impression that some time in 1919 or 1920 you had under consideration the question of proposing Colonel George Fabyan, of Riverbank, Geneva, Illinois, for a D.S. and that I concurred in writing.

I can find no record of this correspondence in our files.

Do your files throw any light upon it, or do you personally recollect anything about it?

Very sincerely yours,

M. Churchill,  
Major, General Staff.

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201 Fabyan, Geo. Col.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER,  
WASHINGTON.Engineer Division  
ing and Research

7 May, 1920

From: The Chief Signal Officer of the Army


To: Colonel George Fabyan, Riverbank Laboratories,  
Geneva, Illinois

Subject: Work of Riverbank Laboratories for the Signal  
Corps during the World War

1. The time has come when the Chief Signal Officer of the Army feels that he should express to Colonel Fabyan and his personnel at the Riverbank Laboratories, the profound admiration and thanks of the Signal Corps for the distinguished services rendered to the United States during the World War by Colonel Fabyan and his Cipher Laboratories, not only in connection with the work accomplished on the cipher problems submitted to these Laboratories by the Signal Corps, but also in connection with the training facilities and instruction in code and cipher provided by Colonel Fabyan for Signal Corps officers without expense to the Government.

2. The greatest achievements of the Riverbank Laboratories, in the opinion of the Signal Corps were, first, the successful attack on the printing telegraph cipher as at first employed by the Signal Corps, and, second, the unassailable and highly scientific analysis and preparation of a method demonstrating the possibility of successfully attacking the same cipher if the cipher indicators of the two key tapes were encoded by a method prepared by the Military Intelligence Department of the Army.

3. That all of this work and work on numerous other problems which was of inestimable value to the Government of the United States, was carried on at a great expense to Colonel Fabyan, and without expense to the United States, is a noteworthy fact which brings us to the acknowledgment that not only has Colonel Fabyan proved to be a great public benefactor, but he has demonstrated again, that the civilian who does not don the uniform in time of public peril may accomplish as great things for the benefit of the Government as many who fight in the front line trenches against the enemy.

  
George O. Squier,  
Major General, U. S. A.,  
Chief Signal Officer.