

Sig.  
Int.  
Activi-  
ties,  
Station  
6

~~SECRET~~

SPSIS-3

31 May 1945

**SUBJECT:** Review of Signal Intelligence Activities in the Philippines, 1934 - 1941

**TO:** Deputy Chief, Military Intelligence Service  
Room 2E 800, The Pentagon  
Washington 25, D. C.

1. In accordance with verbal request, the following information is furnished regarding signal intelligence activities in the Philippines from 1934 through 1941:

a. In the summer of 1934 plans were made to establish an intercept station in the Philippines. Details can be supplied, if desired. In November 1934, one lieutenant, one staff sergeant, and one private were ordered to the Islands for this purpose. (See Tab A.)

b. The lieutenant, Mark Rhoads, Signal Corps, the first graduate of the Signal Intelligence School, arrived in Manila in January 1935. Although there was a desire on the part of the Signal Intelligence Service that Lieutenant Rhoads be assigned to intercept and signal intelligence duties, and despite the desire stated in the last sentence of paragraph 2 of Tab A, Lieutenant Rhoads was given various jobs other than signal intelligence. However, in March 1935 he was able to obtain the private, Howard W. Brown, mentioned in paragraph 1 above, and five other privates with no particular qualifications but who happened to be surplus at the time. The whole group moved to Caballo Island. The staff sergeant, Paul E. Bird, was not available. Three men started training as Kana operators, and two as cryptanalytic clerks. The one trained private furnished the intercept material for submission to Washington, and the two clerks compiled data from the retained copies of the messages.

c. Activities had barely gotten under way, however, when Captain Rhoads was taken ill, hospitalized, and eventually retired. Captain Norman L. Baldwin, Signal Corps, who was also qualified to carry on signal intelligence activities, arrived in the Philippines in September 1934. He was put in charge of radio communication facilities of the Philippine Department. Prior to and after Lieutenant Rhoads tenure, intercept activities were placed under Captain Baldwin's

*31 May 1945  
M.C. [unclear]  
[unclear]*

*Philippine Islands*

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

(SPSIS-3, 31 May 1945)

supervision in addition to his other duties, due to the shortage of officers, until his relief in 1937. Hence the work during this period was carried on only sporadically. In 1936, Lieutenant W. Preston Corderman, the second graduate of the Signal Intelligence School, was sent to the Philippine Department. There were no instructions issued to him or to the Philippine Department that indicated a desire that he be assigned to signal intelligence duties. He was assigned to the 12th Signal Company and was shortly made its commanding officer. He was not assigned to any signal intelligence duties.

d. Not until 1938 was a renewed attempt made to revitalize the intercept station in the Philippines. Up to this time all the personnel engaged in signal intelligence activities in the Philippines were to be supplied from the existing quota and it is not surprising that the work was given secondary consideration. The following is extracted from an undated report (see Tab B) found in the Signal Security Agency files:

"In view of the paucity of results from the Philippine Department and because of the fact that Capt. Corderman was assigned command of the Signal Company rather than used for intelligence work, it was thought best that Capt. Miller's arrival should be preceded by a definite directive. This directive stated that Capt. Miller should not be burdened with routine duties, should be assisted in intercept work and would need two NCO's and eight privates, one of the NCO's to be of the first three grades. The directive further stated that the CSigO would provide equipment, and stated definitely the object of the intercept, the copying of Japanese military traffic."

e. Captain Harrod G. Miller, Signal Corps, was assigned to the Philippine Department in 1938. The War Department directive to the Commanding General, Philippine Department, dated 11 February 1938, is attached as Tab C. The mission was intercept only and the officer in charge was to have no other duties.

f. On 1 January 1939 the 2d Signal Service Company was officially established.

g. Captain Joe R. Sherr, Signal Corps, relieved Captain Miller in 1940. At the time the Chief Signal Officer

~~SECRET~~

(SPSIS-3, 31 May 1945)

requested G-2 to send a letter to the Commanding General, Philippine Department, renewing the directive as given above in paragraph 5. This was sent; a copy is shown in Tab D.

h. A review of the division of responsibilities between the War Department and the Philippine Department regarding signal intelligence activities is given in a radiogram dated 12 March 1941 from the Chief Signal Officer to the Signal Officer, Philippine Department. (See Tab E.) This places the activities of the Monitor Station exclusively under War Department control.

i. Apparently there was no change in this directive through 1941. In answer to a query by radio from the Signal Officer, Philippine Department, the Chief Signal Officer replied on 2 September 1941 that Major Sherr could be assigned additional duties provided they caused no interference with intercept duties. (See Tab F.) Note that the reference letter is the War Department directive mentioned in paragraph 7.

j. The only indication that Manila was ever concerned with solving any of the intercepted material is shown in Tab G in which the Chief Signal Officer in a radiogram dated 24 December 1941 authorized Manila to inspect and take advantage of some Japanese codes on the way from Singapore to the British Delegation in Manila.

k. In view of the fact that the 2d Signal Service Company was not established until 1 January 1939 and that even after its establishment Captain Sherr was not carried as a member of the 2d Signal Service Company, the prescription of the duties and responsibilities of the various officers mentioned above were properly within the jurisdiction of the Department commander and not the Signal Intelligence Service, War Department.

(Signed and sent out 1 June 1945)

7 Incls:  
Tabs A thru G

W. PRESTON CORDERMAN  
Colonel, Signal Corps  
Commanding

3  
7  
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~TAB  
AWAR DEPARTMENT  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON

A.G. 311.5(9-20-34)Pub.

November 8, 1934.

Intercept Station in the Philippine Department.

Commanding General,  
Philippine Department,  
Manila, P. I.

1. With reference to paragraph 1, AG 311.5 (9-20-34)Pub., September 22, 1934, Subject: Intercept Station in the Philippine Department, in which you were informed that additional intercept operators would be provided as soon as qualified men become available, it has now been determined that it will be impractical to furnish trained intercept radio operators as replacements for the Philippine Department.

2. 1st Lieutenant Mark Rhoads, Signal Corps, who will sail for the Philippine Department on the transport leaving New York December 14, 1934, and Staff Sergeant Paul F. Bird, Signal Corps, and Private Howard W. Brown, Signal Corps, who sailed for the Philippine Department on the transport that left New York October 16, 1934, have been specially trained as signal intelligence specialists. They are qualified to carry on the signal intelligence activities in your department, and to act as instructors for the training of their replacements. It is therefore desired that you undertake the training of intercept radio operators in your department to the extent necessary to meet your replacement requirements for this type of specialist.

By order of the Secretary of War:

Joe N. Dalton

Adjutant General.

COPY

TAB A

~~SECRET~~

## BRIEF HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT INTERCEPT STATION

A "Report of Activities on Radio Intercept Mission" by 1st Lieut. Howard S. Paddock and dated April 21, 1926 shows that interest in intercept activity in the Philippines then existed. This report also refers to work along the same line done by then Lieut. Teague. TAB  
B

No directive appears in the files until a letter from the CSigO to SigO Philippine Department dated August 12, 1930. This letter warns of the imminent arrival of one complete set of intercept equipment, desires that it be installed and tested and that personnel be trained for its operation. No statement of the number of men required is given, and it is stated that when report has been made of the efficiency of the apparatus, peacetime duties may be assigned.

Apparently no further instructions were issued and the operation of the station lapsed, for we find in Memorandum from the CSigO to G-2 dated July 2, 1934, the following pertinent matter:

"3. The Development of Equipment. \* \* \* \* Some of this equipment was supplied the Philippine Department several years ago and several months ago additional equipment of a much improved type was shipped to the Philippine Department.

4. b. The Training of Intercept Operators. \* \* \* \* After a study of the matter, and upon the recommendation of the Commanding General of the Philippine Department, the Signal School undertook the development of a scheme for training intercept operators, and during the past school year has trained several enlisted men under this scheme with the view to their employment in the Philippine Department (in conformity with past recommendations of the Department Commander for such action).

5. c. \* \* \* \* \* In conformity with this responsibility, he (CSigO) has proceeded with the training of personnel and the development of improved equipment with the view of recommending at the appropriate time the installation of a station in the Philippines at a more satisfactory location. The unsatisfactory location of the present station is such as to render it practically inoperative as such, therefore, in submitting his letter of June 19, 1934, it was considered unnecessary to refer to that station, (i.e., the one in Manila)."

The above was part of the correspondence relating to the CSigO's request that an intercept station be set up on Caballo Island. Eventually the Department Commander was given authority to locate the station as he desired. Then a letter from the

~~SECRET~~

A.G. to the Commanding General, Philippine Department, dated Sept. 22, 1934, stated that Capt. Baldwin, Lieut. Rhoads, Sgt. Bird and Pvt. Brown were being sent as specially qualified intercept personnel, that these must be considered a part of the existing personnel quota for the Philippines, that additional trained replacements within the quota would be sent later. The letter also listed the apparatus sent or being sent and directed that intercepted messages be forwarded through G-2 for solution in the office CSigO.

A letter dated Nov. 8, 1934 from the A.G. to the C.G. Philippine Department states that in the future intercept operators for that Department must be trained there.

Sporadically thereafter, small batches of traffic were forwarded. The total, in the opinion of Mr. Friedman, was negligible.

On Sept. 16, 1936, a directive was sent to the Commanding General, Philippine Department. This is too long to quote, but it assigned practically the same or similar duties as did the directives sent to the other Departments and to Corps Areas having intercept stations.

In response to a radiogram from the CSigO there is the following radiogram dated February 23, 1937:

"RERAD FEBRUARY TWENTIETH TWO MEN INTERCEPT DUTY  
COMMA ONE MAN RETURNING US MARCH TRANSPORT STOP NO  
REPLACEMENT AVAILABLE STOP ONE RECEIVER COMET PRO  
OLD STYLE AND ONE DICTAPHONE TELECORD RECORDER IN  
USE INTERCEPT WORK

COMPTON"

In view of the paucity of results from the Philippine Department and because of the fact that Capt. Corderman was assigned command of the Signal Company rather than used for intelligence work, it was thought best that Capt. Miller's arrival should be preceded by a definite directive. This directive stated that Capt. Miller should not be burdened with routine duties, should be assisted in intercept work and would need two NCO's and eight privates, one of the NCO's to be of the first three grades. The directive further stated that the CSigO would provide equipment, and stated definitely the object of the intercept, the copying of Japanese military traffic.

~~SECRET~~

ACW

AG 320.2 (2-9-38)  
(Misc.) CSO-B

February 11, 1938.

SUBJECT: Radio Intercept Activity in the Philippine Department.

TAB  
C

TO: The Commanding General, Philippine Department,  
Manila, P. I.

1. It is the desire of the War Department to obtain radio intercept of Japanese radio traffic, particularly of the Japanese Army radio traffic. Captain Harrod G. Miller, Signal Corps who will arrive in your command about May 11, 1938, is peculiarly fitted to organize and conduct such radio intercept activity. It is therefore desired that you place him upon such duty and do not burden him with routine duties, and that you provide the necessary personnel for the conduct of the radio intercept service. It is thought that the necessary personnel would be approximately one noncommissioned officer (Signal Corps) of the first three grades, one noncommissioned officer (Signal Corps) of the fourth grade and eight radio operators.

2. The Chief Signal Officer will take steps to assure that the radio intercept activity is appropriately equipped for the work.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. R. Householder  
Adjutant General.

COPY

TAB C



A.G. 320.2 (5-28-40)O-B

May 29, 1940.

Radio Intercept Activity in the  
Philippine Department.

Commanding General,  
Philippine Department,  
Manila, Philippine Islands.

1. Reference is made to letter of February 11, 1938, from The Adjutant General to the Commanding General, Philippine Department (File A.G. 320.2 (2-9-38) (Misc.) CSO-B), Subject: "Radio Intercept Activity in the Philippine Department."

2. Captain Joe R. Sherr, Signal Corps, has because of his qualifications been selected and assigned as a replacement for the officer referred to in the above mentioned letter. Captain Sherr will arrive in Manila on or about July 20, 1940. The importance of the work to be conducted by this officer renders it desirable that he be placed on no other duties that would interfere therewith.

By order of the Secretary of War:

GEO. A. MILLER

Adjutant General.

TAB D

OCSigO  
OCSigO 311.5-General

/s/ S. B. Akin  
S. B. Akin, Colonel, Sig. C.

MARCH 12 1941

SIGNALS PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT MANILA PI

ANY LOCAL SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE MATTERS AFFECTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT COMMANDER AND REQUIRING COORDINATION WITH THE NAVY SHOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH THE LOCAL JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE PARENTHESIS SEE SECTION SIX CHAPTER EIGHT JOINT ACTION OF THE ARMY AND NAVY AS AMENDED BY CHANGE JOINT ACTION NUMBER TWO PARENTHESIS STOP THE ONLY PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES THAT COME DIRECTLY UNDER WAR DEPARTMENT ARE THE MONITORING ACTIVITIES OF STATION NUMBER SIX STOP THE MONITORING DIRECTIVES OF THIS STATION HAVE BEEN AND ARE CONTINUOUSLY COORDINATED BY THIS OFFICE WITH DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY THE NAVY DEPARTMENT TO THE NAVY'S CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES STOP IT IS THEREFORE DESIRED THAT NO CHANGE IN THESE DIRECTIVES BE ATTEMPTED LOCALLY STOP RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIGNAL INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES PARENTHESIS INCLUDING DIRECTION FINDING PARENTHESIS OTHER THAN AS ABOVE MENTIONED RESTS ENTIRELY WITH THE LOCAL COMMANDERS STOP IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES THE WAR DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES COVERING THE ACTIVITIES OF MONITORING STATION NUMBER SIX WILL NOT UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFICALLY ORDERED BY THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER BE CHANGED STOP PERTINENT INTELLIGENCE RESULTING FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF MONITORING STATION NUMBER SIX WILL WHEN AVAILABLE BE SUPPLIED BY G-TWO OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT TO THE COMMANDING GENERAL PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT STOP THIS IS IN REPLY TO YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY TENTH

TAB E

MAUBORGNE

TAB F

~~SECRET~~OCSigO  
OCSigO 311.5 General/s/ R. W. Minckler  
R. W. Minckler, Lt. Col., Sig C

SEPTEMBER 2 1941

SIGNALS PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT MANILA P I

SEE SECRET LETTER AG THREE TWENTY POINT TWO DATED MAY TWENTY  
NINE COMMA NINETEEN FORTY TO COMMANDING GENERAL PHILIPPINE  
DEPARTMENT FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL REGARDING DUTY OF MAJOR  
SHERR LETTER DOES NOT PROHIBIT OTHER DUTIES IF ASSIGNMENT  
CAUSES NO INTERFERENCE WITH INTERCEPT DUTIES STOP IF CHANGE IN  
LETTER IS DESIRED SUGGEST RECOMMENDATIONS BE SUBMITTED THROUGH  
COMMAND CHANNELS TO WAR DEPARTMENT

OLMSTEAD ACTING

SENT No. 114  
September 2, 1941 TNP

TAB F

~~SECRET~~

OCSigO  
OCSigO 311.5 General

0-3

R. W. Minckler, Lt. Col., Sig C.

DECEMBER 24, 1941

SIGNALS PHILIPPINE DEPARTMENT MANILA P I  
CERTAIN MATERIAL IN CONNECTION WITH JAPANESE CODES HAS BEEN  
FORWARDED FROM SINGAPORE TO BRITISH DELEGATION IN MANILA STOP  
REQUEST YOU FIND OUT WHETHER THIS MATERIAL WAS FORWARDED TO  
WASHINGTON AND WHEN STOP YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO MAKE COPIES  
AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY SUCH MATERIAL IN TRANSIT

OLMS'HEAD

COPY

TAB G