Tracking Intelligence Information: The Office of Strategic Services

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Abstract

Created during World War II, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was the United States' first centralized intelligence agency, comprising research and analysis as well as various clandestine operations. The new agency accumulated massive amounts of information from open and secret sources and maintained such information in the form of reports, maps, charts, memos, photographs, and other kinds of documentation. A unit within the OSS Research and Analysis Branch, the Central Information Division, collected most of these documents and managed their use for intelligence analysis with the creation of an intricate card indexing system. The Central Information Division's careful tracking of information made possible present-day archival use of the cards and the records they index.

Introduction

In September 1944 the American government learned from a British source that Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering had apparently been under the influence of drugs while meeting German officers. It was also reported that Goering sported a "gold embroidered green silk shirt, violet silk stockings, and black patent leather pumps." Hair dyed "an appropriate Nordic yellow," rouge on his cheeks, penciled eyebrows, and a monocle completed his ensemble. He appeared to have been in a stupor, "like a jellyfish." This colorful information traveled from at least one captured German officer to an anonymous British source to the American chief of the Military Intel-
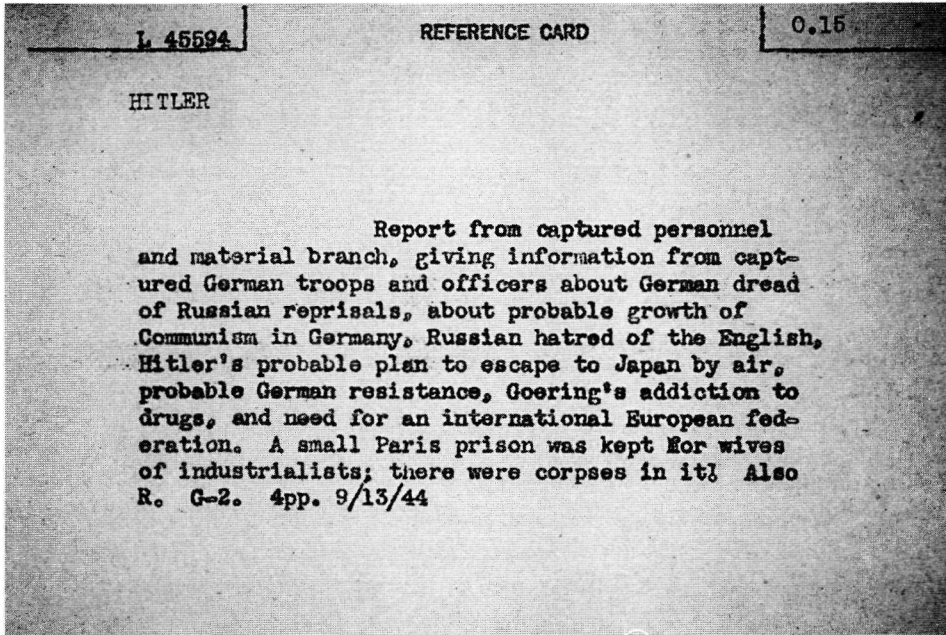
FIGURE 1. Typical format of an OSS Research and Analysis Branch index card containing eye-catching references to wartime subject matter in its corresponding intelligence report, L 45594. The decimal is in the General category (0), followed by 15 representing "Individuals, country." (RG 226, entry 17, box 2). See the appendix to this article for a description of the index cards themselves.

ligence Service, and from there to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), where it was indexed (see Figure 1) and filed. The OSS Research and Analysis Branch (R&A) indexed thousands of intelligence reports like this on a range of subjects during World War II.[1]

Despite significant budget, personnel, space, and recognition obstacles within R&A and the OSS, the indexing and dissemination of intelligence information persisted, leaving an irreplaceable research legacy in the National Archives. R&A's information would be virtually inaccessible to us now were it not for the extremely detailed index cards. Writers such as Robin Winks and Bradley F. Smith have praised the cards' importance and their

[1] Report L45594 from Brig. Gen. R. A. Osmun, 13 September 1944; entry 21 ("[Formerly] Security-Classified Intelligence Reports ['L' Series]"); Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services (hereafter referred to as RG 226); National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The index cards are part of RG 226, Research and Analysis Branch, Central Information Division, entries 14 and 17. For additional information, see *Federal Records of World War II: Military Agencies* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1951), 14–29. More description is available from Timothy P. Mulligan's chapter VIII, "Intelligence," in a forthcoming part of *Guide to Records Relating to U.S. Military Participation in World War II. Part 1: Policy, Planning, Administration* was published in 1996 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration). See also George C. Chalou, ed., *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), based on papers presented at the NARA-hosted conference of the same name in 1991. The R&A numbered studies, or reports, are part of Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State (RG 59), also at NARA.

role in the war effort.[2] Furthermore, the OSS made a significant and lasting contribution to the study of intelligence by recognizing the continuing value of its own records. Years later, the National Archives built on that effort in providing public access to the records.

Origins of the Research and Analysis Branch

While other countries already had intelligence agencies, the United States developed its first national intelligence agency just months before its entrance into World War II, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) on July 11, 1941, and eventually reconstituted it as OSS by military order on June 13, 1942.[3] Under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the COI and the OSS were given two important functions during World War II: to gather, evaluate, and analyze intelligence in support of the war against the Axis Powers, and to plan and execute operations in support of intelligence procurement.

Under the Washington-based Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence, R&A obtained, indexed, and analyzed a vast amount of information from raw intelligence in the form of cables, telegrams, letters, and memoranda. From this information, R&A generated reports, maps, charts, and studies for the use of OSS and other components of the federal government to inform policy decisions and military action.

During wartime, the professional analysts on the R&A staff largely came from civilian life, including economists, historians, geographers and other social scientists from numerous universities.[4] Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, the Coordinator of Information who served as Director of OSS throughout the war, felt that these academics had the most appropriate background and training to analyze intelligence. The staff included scholars of various political persuasions, such as Conyers Read, Ralph Bunche, Felix Gilbert, H. Stuart Hughes, Kermit Roosevelt, Jr., Edward Hartshorne, Sherman Kent, Herbert Marcuse, Carl Schorske, Harold Deutsch, C. Douglas Dillon, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Walt Rostow, and others. James Phinney Baxter III, president of Williams College, was the first director of R&A. Later, R&A's director of research, William L. Langer, Coolidge Professor of History at Harvard Uni-

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[2] See Robin W. Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961* (New York: Morrow, 1987), 6, and Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 361. A useful bibliography and accompanying essay for these and other works focusing on the OSS is found in George C. Constantinides's "The OSS: A Brief Review of Literature," in Chalou, *The Secrets War*, 109–17.

[3] JCS Directive No. 67, 21 June 1942, expanded the content of the military order by specifying OSS's duties. For more background information, see Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Frederick, Md.: University Press of America, 1981).

[4] For a study of some of the R&A staff, see Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

versity, succeeded Baxter and served as the director of R&A during most of the war.

Of R&A's eight divisions, four were regional: Europe-Africa, the Far East, Latin America, and the Soviet Union. The other four were functional: Map, Central Information (CID), Current Intelligence Staff, and Interdepartmental Committee. One of the first divisions in the COI that continued to be important to OSS throughout the war, CID contained the units that accessioned, indexed, and controlled the information R&A obtained. CID also implemented R&A's reference program and intelligence collection, providing extensive service to OSS and other agencies.

The Indexing System

As both a lawyer and a military officer, Donovan believed strongly in the importance of intelligence and its organization and accessibility for military strategy. An official history of the OSS published many years after the war noted that Donovan's experience as a lawyer "had impressed upon him the great value of cross-indexing when dealing with masses of material in long and difficult trials." He did not hold government records management in very high regard, apparently feeling that "one reason high officials did not have adequate information on which to base policy was that intelligence, once obtained, often was filed and never could be found again."[5] Donovan wanted an index to be as current and efficient as possible. Indeed, some in OSS envisioned that CID "might act as a central archives for the whole agency," a goal which was realized to some extent.[6] Although R&A obtained much of its information from open sources available at various institutions, clandestine intelligence information from other OSS branches found its way to CID in Washington.

The first head of CID was Wilmarth S. Lewis, a Yale alumnus who had begun to collect and edit the multivolume published papers of Horace Walpole and had established a Walpole library on the grounds of his home in Farmington, Connecticut. Lewis, known as "Lefty" among his friends, later asserted in his autobiography that Donovan had needed a filing and indexing system that would permit quick retrieval and that no such system then existed in Washington. Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, a friend of Lewis's, and Donovan had tried to recruit former Archivist of the United States R. D. W. Connor to create the filing and indexing system, but Connor declined the offer. Although organizing the files and indexes at his Walpole

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[5] Kermit Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker, 1976 edition), 49. The *War Report* originally was prepared as a classified document in 1947 by the Strategic Services Unit's History Project, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, War Department.

[6] Roosevelt, *War Report*, 60.

Library in Farmington and teaching a course on the management of "historical material" at the Yale Graduate School constituted his only experience suited to the task, Lewis decided, at the encouragement of his wife Annie Burr Auchincloss "to offer himself for the archival post" and COI accepted.[7]

In the early days of COI preceding U.S. entry into World War II, the R&A scholars shared a sense of patriotic camaraderie. Lewis later wryly remembered that, "Here was their chance to show that teachers—the respected and the scorned—could be of use in wartime."[8] Lewis immediately set about supervising the index's creation, maintenance, and use with the assistance of Lawrence Egbert, a man experienced in the ways of the Civil Service. Soon, Lewis found himself taking leisurely lunches and meetings with new colleagues Colonel Frank Ross and Commander Francis Denebrink, who were COI liaisons with the departments of Army and Navy. "After the Division was running smoothly they had little to do except to meet in Lefty's office, close the door importantly, and color their meerschaum pipes," Lewis recalled somewhat tongue-in-cheek. The entry of the United States into the war altered this friendly arrangement, as Ross transferred to San Francisco and Denebrink began to reorganize the Navy Department.[9]

Just days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, R&A director William L. Langer expressed to Lewis a desire to have CID's index made "as complete as possible."[10] With assistance, Lewis developed the system that R&A analysts and other government researchers then used to request documents for their projects during the war. Initially, CID marked incoming reports numerically in the order in which CID received them, without consideration to origin, subject, or chronology, making an index critically important. CID staff also placed them on accessions lists distributed to other agencies, as well as throughout OSS, to notify potential users of recently received documents. Next index cards were prepared, cross-referencing the documents' information by personal name, subject, and country. After indexing a document, the indexer wrote a brief narrative description of the document's contents. Once the index cards were prepared, the documents could be filed. CID maintained a reading room where researchers, either OSS staff or other authorized government personnel, read the records after examining the index. The index provided the critical link between the documents themselves and the

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[7] Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, *One Man's Education* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 334–36. These memoirs, in which Lewis refers to himself alternatively in the first and third person (Wilmarth, Lefty, or Lewis), provide only a brief treatment of Lewis' two-year term in the OSS.

[8] Lewis, *One Man's Education*, 338.

[9] Lewis, *One Man's Education*, 339–41.

[10] William L. Langer to Wilmarth S. Lewis, 1 December 1941; folder 2119, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146 ("Washington: OSS Operation/Service Records"); RG 226.

individuals who wished to gain access to them to analyze the intelligence information.

Many federal agencies and military components forwarded documents of potential interest to CID, including the Department of State; Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF); Military Intelligence Division (MID); U.S. Army Air Forces Intelligence Division; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; other components of OSS; and other agencies such as the National Archives. J. Edgar Hoover sent a number of items to Donovan for his use that ended up in CID's files, as did reports from American allies. Indexers prepared as many cards as the subject content of each document required, focusing on items of "future reference value" and trying to "avoid cataloguing data which is definitely obsolete or of transitory value."[11] CID sought to "assure the most effective service in making available to authorized persons the information and material which it has or can obtain." On average, eight cards were created for each document because demand warranted that level of detail. Four hundred to five hundred calls were received each month in the summer of 1942 from OSS staff members beginning new research projects.[12] Accession sheets listed the documents that came to R&A from outside official and non-official sources. Outside agencies that received copies of the lists of accessions included the British Joint Intelligence Committee, Army Intelligence (G-2), the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. By the fall of 1942, OSS daily distributed seventy copies of ten lists.[13]

However, the system's weaknesses were soon apparent. Sometimes documents arrived at R&A and were immediately routed to research specialists before going to CID for accessioning, indexing, and filing, preventing CID from exercising control over incoming documents. In addition, demand for documents continued to grow so that it was not unusual for several people to request the same documents at the same time. Staff member Norman Becchio recommended to Lewis measures that could be taken to correct and streamline the "faults and ills of the system."[14] Lewis forwarded the suggestions to Langer for his consideration by saying that "The present arrangement is wasteful of time and effort. The proposed plan will stop the nonsense which has plagued all of us for six months."[15] By nature, the analysts' mission

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[11] The filing manual is found at the beginning of the index cards (series, or entry, 14, RG 226).

[12] "Central Information Division," June–July 1942; folder 1069, WASH-R&A-FIN-3; entry 146; RG 226.

[13] James P. Baxter 3d to Col. William J. Donovan, 2 October 1942; folder 2125, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146; RG 226.

[14] Norman Becchio to Wilmarth S. Lewis, 31 March 1942; folder 2125, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146; RG 226.

[15] Wilmarth S. Lewis to William L. Langer, 7 April 1942; folder 2125, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146; RG 226.

to synthesize a lot of information quickly into polished reports conflicted with the desire of others to see the same information.

CID coped with the realities of the competing urgency for documents as best it could. Staff member Lawrence Egbert described the index to Maj. Gen. George V. Strong (Army G-2) as "peculiarly adapted to wartime needs, since it [was] designed to avoid the complexities of most decimal systems." The approach was "to make index cards containing precis of documents, so that one can see at a glance if a document is useful in his particular assignment."[16] As the war continued, the volume and types of intelligence CID obtained required adjustments to the filing and reference access of records.

From the onset of American participation in the war until late 1942, much of the information gathered came from open sources, and CID characterized the majority of reports as "regular." Then, CID began to receive documents from the OSS Secret Intelligence Branch (SI) for accessioning and indexing. CID created a special file, known as the Limited File ("L"), to separate the SI material from the "regular" documents. As with the "regular" materials, staff stamped the SI documents numerically and with the prefix "L" in the order received for filing in a separate cabinet. Index cards for "L" documents were also placed in a separate file so that access to them would be more limited than to the "regular" materials. Only authorized personnel could view "L" materials in the CID reference reading room.[17]

With the increase in the receipt of records at CID, Lewis occasionally intervened personally to keep track of documents. In a letter to OSS Major David K. E. Bruce, the future ambassador, Lewis requested that Bruce investigate the location of a particular document even though "it is perhaps a small matter with our world in flames." Bruce responded, "The ferrets have chased the enclosed document out of the hole. It comes to you garbed in figurative sackcloth and ashes. Where it was will, I trust, never be known. Res ipsa Loquitur."[18] As demonstrated in this bureaucratic exchange, even with the exigencies of war, the caliber of intelligence, urbanity, and sophistication of many of the OSS personnel made such routine records management transactions interesting.

Pressures of War Affect the Central Information Division

During the first year of the United States' involvement in World War II, R&A's work truly had accelerated. CID's reference unit experienced a 400

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[16] Lawrence D. Egbert to Maj. Gen. George V. Strong, 14 September 1942; folder 2125, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146; RG 226.

[17] Wilmarth S. Lewis to Carl E. Schorske, 5 November 1942; folder 2119, WASH-R&A-OP-21; entry 146; RG 226.

[18] Wilmarth S. Lewis to Major David Bruce, 14 November 1942, and David Bruce to Wilmarth S. Lewis, 16 November 1942; folder 46; entry 92 ("Central Files"); RG 226.

percent increase in the number of documents handled from January to December 1942 at an average of 12,700 documents per month. By January 1943 the indexers had found it difficult to keep up with the "greatly increased flow of material from SI (several thousand documents a month)." That, in turn, affected the reference personnel who had to make the documents available to the OSS staff and other agencies as necessary.[19]

Staff problems that plagued R&A throughout the war adversely affected productivity at all levels. CID budget requests consistently stressed the need for increasing the number of personnel to handle the volume of work. One budget outline described the dilemma: "The importance of the Index has been more and more widely recognized with the result that many more calls are now made upon the staff." With not enough staff, the indexing was "falling behind" causing "an inevitable impairment of [its] usefulness."[20] Overworked and understaffed, CID could not cut any corners in the indexing process although some reports were probably missed. In addition to handling the volume, the indexers had to begin to index the intelligence reports "more completely . . . to [meet] the demands of the research personnel."[21] The abundance of work did not mean that the staff slipped in its standards, however. An examination of the effectiveness of CID's reference staff, which did the indexing work, in May 1943 revealed that "objectives of the operation and practical uses of materials available need somewhat closer definition for optimum results," but that "in general, these operations are conducted at a high level of excellence as to quality of work." A report issued after this examination cited the reference section as "the backbone of the division."[22]

Despite the high praise for the reference section, other units within CID faced sizable problems, fragmentation, and criticism. Lawrence Egbert, with a background in law and economics, grew weary of his executive and administrative work in CID as its assistant chief, although the agency held him in high regard. By April 1943 he considered taking a position with the Army Judge Advocate General.[23] The next month Egbert opted for a commission in the Armed Forces and Donovan released Egbert for duty.[24] His departure probably exacerbated Wilmarth Lewis's own frustration over the state of affairs in his division.

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[19] Wilmarth S. Lewis to C. W. Barnes, 6 January 1943 (Budget Estimates for 1943); folder 39, WASH-BF-FIN-7; entry 146; RG 226.

[20] C. W. Barnes to Wilmarth Lewis, 20 February 1943 (Budget for Fiscal Year 1944); folder 1065, WASH-R&A-FIN-3; entry 146; RG 226.

[21] Budget and Finance Outline, 25 February 1943; folder 1062, WASH-R&A-FIN-3; entry 146; RG 226.

[22] Captain Weil to Major Sears, 28 May 1943; folder 1065, WASH-R&A-FIN-3; entry 146; RG 226.

[23] James H. MacMillan to file, 6 April 1943; folder 23, WASH-REG-AD-7; entry 92; RG 226.

[24] William J. Donovan to Provost Marshal General, U.S. Army, 13 May 1943; folder 486, (also on microfilm publication M1642, roll 44, target 15), WASH-DIR-OFF-OP-17; entry 190 ("Director's Office and Field Station Records"); RG 226.

Lewis felt that R&A's administrative officer, William Applebaum, was unfairly critical of CID. Lewis protested in a letter to William Langer that CID's "system has been called the best in Washington over and over again—within the week it was called so by the Army Staff College and was adopted *in toto* by them. I am also proud of the library, which we would not have had if it had not been for me." In effect, Lewis issued an ultimatum that if CID were not elevated to the level of a branch, he would resign, "convinced that my usefulness to you as a member of R&A is over."[25] Lewis quickly followed this with another letter to Langer expressing regret about the tone of his protest and saying that he wished that he had confronted Langer sooner "about the paralysis I feel in this job." He also asked Langer to "please accept my apologies for anything in [the letter] which has annoyed or disappointed you. I should be sorry to leave the OSS, but I should be sorrier to lose your friendship."[26]

Langer acknowledged the value of Lewis's friendship in return, and responded to his frustrations. Nevertheless, Langer would not deliver what Lewis wanted. He replied that after consulting with R&A's Board of Analysts:

> We all feel that CID from the very nature of the case is the life blood of the whole R&A Branch and that if we were to lose control over its policy and operations it would be well nigh impossible for R&A to do effective work. Under the circumstances I would only be misrepresenting the facts if I gave you even the slightest reason to think that any such arrangement would meet with my approval. If I understand your letter correctly, you are making such approval the condition for your staying with this organization. If I am right in thinking this, I see no other alternative but to accept your resignation.[27]

Despite the seeming finality of this decision, Lewis remained at the helm of CID for several more months.

CID began to gather a new category of intelligence information in June 1943, the "OB" or Order of Battle reports, requiring indexing like the "regular" and "L" information. These records related to the composition, strength, location, and movements of both enemy and friendly forces. Meanwhile, budget shortages squeezed R&A to the extent that Langer told Donovan that the branch operated "in the state of chaos which makes it quite impossible for us to plan and to organize our work intelligently."[28] Dissatisfaction trickled down among the CID staff. Although not as luminous as the academic research analysts, CID indexers had to know how to conduct research, what "constitutes

[25] Wilmarth S. Lewis to William L. Langer, 26 June 1943; folder 19; entry 1 (R&A, Office of the Chief, "[Formerly] Security-Classified Correspondence, 1942–46"); RG 226.

[26] Wilmarth S. Lewis to William L. Langer, 30 June 1943; folder 19; entry 1; RG 226.

[27] William L. Langer to Wilmarth S. Lewis, 30 June 1943; folder 19; entry 1; RG 226.

[28] William L. Langer to General William J. Donovan, 9 August 1943; folder 32, WASH-R&A-AD-3; entry 145 ("R&A and R&D Records"); RG 226.

important research material," and how to write briefly and clearly. Usually the indexers covered specific geographic areas in order to become "an expert on intelligence materials for his region and . . . more accurately determine what information is and what is not important." Yet, the units that created and maintained the card index remained at the lowest rung of the CID ladder. Jesse H. Shera, chief of CID's reference section, indicated that "to describe those workers as indexers is both misleading and quite inadequate" for they were "analyzing and abstracting the materials that [came] to their desks." Shera, who became a prominent librarian after the war, argued that the work was "definitely not clerical, but professional," requiring "a good knowledge of international conditions and current history." Although a bachelor's degree was required and graduate study preferred, CID paid the indexers, by that time almost all female, at the clerical salary grade levels.[29]

By August 1943 CID's Documents Unit received over 6,000 documents per month and held a total of 57,800 "regular," "L," and "OB" documents. The unit's analysis staff abstracted and indexed the "regular" documents, but could not index the "L" documents because of shortages in personnel.[30] Lewis felt that this would have a negative impact if allowed to continue. The next month, Lewis apprised Langer of the declining personnel resources, pointing out that the workload showed a steady increase over the first several months of 1943, yet the number of staff to handle it did not increase accordingly. One unit within the division, the Censor Materials Unit, experienced staff shortages to such an extent that its publication of *Index Notes* stopped because its late issue dates "rendered it useless." Lewis indicated that the Reference Section alone had been authorized seventy-two positions in the 1943–44 budget, yet had only fifty-two staff members in September 1943. Lewis requested additional staff in the Analysis Unit in order to tackle indexing the "L" documents. Furthermore, the regular material arrived at a more rapid rate "than was anticipated . . . the increase has been 300%."[31] Lewis left the OSS not long after this request for more staff, finding the increasing bureaucracy and lack of autonomy stifling and his interest in his job evaporated.[32]

[29] Jesse H. Shera to J. W. Hoot, 13 August 1943; folder 871, WASH-IS-OP-17; entry 146; RG 226. Shera's postwar publications included *Historians, Books and Libraries; A Survey of Historical Scholarship in Relation to Library Resources, Organization and Services* (1953), *Automation Without Fear* (1961), *Libraries and the Organization of Knowledge* (1965), *Documentation and the Organization of Knowledge* (1966), and several bibliographic works.

[30] Jesse H. Shera to William Applebaum, 19 August 1943; folder 24, WASH-R&A-AD-3; entry 145; RG 226.

[31] Wilmarth S. Lewis to William L. Langer, 4 September 1943; folder 5, WASH-R&A-AD-3; entry 145; RG 226.

[32] Lewis, *One Man's Education*, 346.

Lt. Raymond Deston, USNR, replaced Lewis at CID. As one of his first initiatives, he created the "XL" category of records. Like the "L" records, their use was confined to OSS personnel, but circulated to staff offices rather than limited to the CID reading room.[33] CID also instituted new procedures for rush accessioning, providing for the indexing of received documents within two hours.[34] These efforts attempted to address some of the division's bottlenecks and strapped resources. By early 1944 CID had accessioned, indexed, and distributed eighty-five thousand of the intelligence documents it had received from various sources.[35] Other CID procedures and their incumbent problems stemming from use of the index cards remained relatively the same for the duration of the war.

While some documents were freely circulated, others were not. Keeping track of requested documents that should not have escaped the CID reading room constituted a recurrent problem. Although records faced peril whether used in OSS or at other agencies, they were at greater risk when they were loaned outside OSS. Records were sometimes returned to CID with pages, maps, and other enclosures missing. On occasion, OSS personnel themselves unwittingly interfered with the integrity of the CID files. For example, photographs attached to a record became separated after having been loaned outside CID. Months later an OSS staff member who discovered the photographs tore them up by mistake. When he realized that the photographs might have belonged to CID, he returned the fragments "pasted together and replaced in the original document." One staff member lamented to Jesse Shera that CID did not "have either the time or the personnel" to check records' "contents each time the documents were used."[36] Unfortunately, some records were destroyed or lost as a result.

During the last year of the war, CID attempted to obtain several documents that had been loaned to staff working for the Assistant Chief of Air Staff for Intelligence (A-2). CID head Deston bemoaned the purported destruction of at least one record and pressed for "a signed statement by the individual to whom it was loaned, stating that he actually destroyed this report." Records destruction concerned Deston because OSS staff interested in the same record "now must be denied the information which would be of value to them."[37] While the OSS wished to satisfy the desires of other

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[33] Lt. Raymond Deston, USNR, to All Recipients of the "L" Accessions List, 15 January 1944; folder 26; entry 1; RG 226.

[34] R&A Branch Order #65, 16 February 1944; folder 26; entry 1; RG 226.

[35] "Accomplishments of the Research and Analysis Branch, OSS, from 1 January 1943 to 28 March 1944;" folder 17; entry 1; RG 226.

[36] Edwin Castle to Jesse H. Shera, 9 July 1943; folder 871, WASH-IS-OP-17; entry 146; RG 226.

[37] Lt. Raymond Deston, USNR, to Maj. Philip L. Gore, 28 August 1944; folder 781, WASH-IS–OP-1; entry 146; RG 226.

agencies wanting to use records for devising strategy or planning, the OSS scholars needed the records to write their own studies on various war-related topics.

As the end of the war approached, new vital issues arose. CID began to assist in the effort to investigate war crimes and had to enforce R&A's adoption of the "Third Agency Rule," whereby R&A could not release documents obtained from one agency to another agency. Army personnel could obtain copies of Army documents, but would have to contact the Navy for access to its documents in OSS possession. Langer in particular offered access to CID's now-famous index as the source of potential useful information.[38] Efforts to strengthen records management continued. Deston visited the R&A Branch in London and proposed a General Order to try to get CID documents returned to their rightful place. Deston found that staff "have left for overseas assignments, transferred to other positions, and in some cases, resigned without returning the borrowed material." Understandably, Deston was especially concerned about the fact that many of the missing items were classified.[39]

Disposition of the OSS Records after the War

Well before the war ended, others in Washington considered what might be the collective fate of the OSS records. Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish recognized and anticipated the future appeal of R&A records while some R&A functions were located at the Library of Congress. In 1944 MacLeish made overtures to Langer asking him to consider relinquishing copies of some OSS materials to the Library of Congress. MacLeish stressed that all necessary security measures would be met and guaranteed. In addition, the library would provide control over the material "through its cataloging procedures." "No other agency offers the same promise of control," MacLeish insisted. Jokingly, he offered to give OSS a safe with a combination provided solely to OSS. He stipulated that OSS mark the safe " 'to be delivered to the Library of Congress upon conclusion of the treaty of peace.' "[40]

Langer's considerations for disposition depended on the prospects for the continued existence of OSS after the war. He concluded that the records either "would be kept as part of a continuing file" if the OSS continued to exist; or, with the termination of OSS, the allocation of materials between the National Archives and the Library of Congress would be necessary. Although Langer pointed out to MacLeish that he did not make those observations "by way of a gentle prelude to a negative reply," he concluded that

[38] William L. Langer to Ensign James Donovan, 19 January 1945; folder 19; entry 1; RG 226.

[39] Lt. Raymond Deston, USNR, to Alvah W. Sulloway, 12 May 1945; folder 19; entry 1; RG 226.

[40] Archibald MacLeish to William L. Langer, 29 March 1944; folder 11, "Library of Congress;" entry 1; RG 226.

"the majority of our reports embodying military and other strategic information are not now and never will be what is ordinarily regarded as library material."[41] This discussion occurred prior to passage of the Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. Chapters 21, 29, 31, and 33) which later strengthened the role and importance of the Archivist of the United States and records management in documenting agencies' functions and activities. The exchange between Langer and MacLeish reflected the vague atmosphere in which some agencies operated regarding disposition of their records. Nevertheless, the OSS records as a whole were not destined for the Library of Congress, but for the National Archives.[42]

That Langer even thought about the relatively young National Archives was commendable. A number of National Archives publications found in the OSS records include a reprint of Emmet J. Leahy's "Records Administration and the War" first published in *Military Affairs* in 1942; Collas G. Harris's July 1942 circular, "Archives and the War;" Philip C. Brooks's July 1942 circular, "The Functions of Records Officers in the Federal Government;" Harris's "The Protection of Federal Records Against Hazards of War;" and Helen L. Chatfield's "The Role of the Archivist in Public Administration;" as well as several reference information circulars describing records in the holdings of the National Archives relating to foreign countries. Some of these publications were received by CID and indexed and filed in the "regular" series. We can only speculate as to whether the receipt of such publications served to heighten Langer's awareness of proper disposition. Of additional interest is the note on contributors in *Military Affairs* commenting on Emmett J. Leahy's article: "His article may appear at first glance to be on a strange—certainly a neglected—subject for *Military Affairs.* Proper records administration has, however, a two-fold military significance; first, in the actual conduct of the present war; second, in the records of the war which will remain for future historical research."[43]

President Harry Truman's Executive Order 9621 of October 1, 1945 discontinued the OSS and transferred the personnel (including William

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[41] William L. Langer to Archibald MacLeish, 11 April 1944; folder 11; entry 1; RG 226.

[42] According to one of Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden's anecdotes in their memoir of the OSS, at the end of the war, Donovan "called one of his secretaries and said he wanted to look at the files." When he was asked which files he had in mind, he replied that he wanted to see all of them to read while he had some time on his hands. The secretary contacted the "reports office where all the papers from all the OSS branches and projects and offices overseas had been deposited throughout the years." After some calculation, a staff member there informed the secretary that if Donovan were to work "at a steady eight hours a day on a six-day week," he could "complete a cursory inspection of all OSS reports in sixteen-and-a-half years." We may conclude that despite his ambition, the General's intensive review of all the records probably never occurred. See Alsop and Braden, *Sub Rosa: The Office of Strategic Services and American Espionage* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946), 21.

[43] See folder 2008, "National Archives," WASH-R&A-OP-20; entry 146; RG 226. Emmett Leahy's article appears in *Military Affairs*, 6(2), 1942, 97–108. The remarks about his contribution appear on p. 110.

Langer), functions, and records of R&A to the Department of State. Many of the scholars returned to their academic positions, but others remained, seeing CID as an important part of any postwar intelligence activities. The reference section which accessioned and indexed intelligence documents had to continue in some form because its "work is basic, and without it confusion would result."[44] Langer did his best to see that R&A's successor, the State Department's Interim Research and Intelligence Service, properly maintained the CID records.[45] When R&A overseas office files caught Langer's attention, he issued a directive that any files not duplicated in Washington should be assessed for their value and forwarded. He further directed that the majority of duplicated files be given to embassies, other agencies, or surviving OSS covert operations where the records "would be valuable and secure."[46] Langer also left his own office files behind when he left government service. In his autobiography, Langer acknowledged that his memory of some R&A activities had grown hazy "partly because I carried away no records whatever when I resigned in 1946."[47] The fullness of Langer's R&A files in the National Archives would seem to bear this out.

The remaining personnel, functions, and records of all other OSS components were transferred to a separate Strategic Services Unit established in the War Department to settle the affairs of OSS. Soon the War Department transferred its OSS records to the Central Intelligence Group, which then passed them on to the Central Intelligence Agency. Some of the OSS personnel in operational units remained with the CIA or left and returned to it later, including future Directors of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, William Colby, and William Casey.

During the war, the OSS had sometimes been referred to as "Oh So Social," and "Oh So Secret" because many in Washington did not understand how so many of these people from privileged backgrounds were occupying their time. Also, a tension had existed between some of the operational staff risking their lives in the field and those in R&A, primarily in Washington. Neither side fully appreciated the value of the other. One

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[44] "Postwar Activities for CID," unsigned and undated; folder 7; entry 1; RG 226.

[45] After transfer to the Department of State, some of the R&A intelligence reports were checked out to the department library. The National Archives did receive some of the reports from State after contacting that department when government researchers encountered the chargeout cards before the records were released for public inspection. (Interview with John E. Taylor, Washington, D.C., 22 February 1989.) Chargeout cards to reports never forwarded from the State Department library remain interfiled in the OSS records; those records were likely lost in a disposal of temporary library materials in the late 1960s.

[46] William L. Langer to Lt. Col. H. S. Hughes (Germany), Allan Evans (London), Lt. Jack Sawyer (Paris), and Lt. Philip Conley (Rome), 7 November 1945; folder 19; entry 1; RG 226.

[47] William L. Langer, *In and Out of the Ivory Tower: The Autobiography of William L. Langer* (New York: Neale Watson Academic Publications, 1977), 189. Langer later briefly joined the Central Intelligence Agency to organize the Office of National Estimates.

R&A manager, John A. Wilson, characterized the relationship during the war: "The 'cloak and dagger boys' felt that the 'long-haired' researchists were owlishly impractical . . . and were insufficiently schooled on security. On the other hand, the researchists felt that the operations people were rashly eager to 'get something done right away,' disregarded the necessity for basic knowledge as controlling action, and therefore made disastrous mistakes. From the first there was no useful contact between the two points of view."[48] Even as an academic himself, Langer described the R&A staff thusly, "A real weakness of the R & A Branch was undoubtedly the very fact that it was of necessity so largely academic." He went on to point out that "in so far as academic people as a class have little practical business experience and only rather restricted contacts we were no doubt laboring under a particular disability."[49]

In *Sub Rosa: The Office of Strategic Services and American Espionage,* an OSS memoir published shortly after the war, authors Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden's said of the OSS nicknames, "That they were coined at all, however, is significant evidence that OSS throughout the war did at least one job thoroughly well, namely the job of not letting anybody know very much about what OSS was doing."[50] This evidently held true for the National Archives, whose staff wondered about the records' relationship to the functions of OSS. OSS posed something of a mystery, despite the fact that it had R&A units working in the National Archives Building during the war.[51] Staff interoffice memorandums in 1946 focusing on the first accession of OSS records reflect ambivalence over administering those materials.

On March 5, 1946 J. H. Ottemiller of the Department of State placed a telephone call to the office of the Archivist of the United States. He wondered whether the National Archives would accession some of the R&A records. National Archives appraisal officer Philip C. Brooks immediately considered several problems associated with accepting the "highly classified" Order of Battle records which related to foreign military organization, disposition of troops, supplies, and other matters. Brooks identified three issues: State did not immediately know the volume of the records (except that there were twenty-five thousand dockets); whether the records should be put into the record group covering State Department records or into a separate record group for OSS records; the issue of "eventual" declassification of the records,

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[48] John A. Wilson to William L. Langer, 17 May 1943; folder 33, WASH-R&A-AD-3; entry 145; RG 226.

[49] These remarks appear on pp. 6–7 of the narrative attached to William L. Langer to Kermit Roosevelt, 5 March 1947; folder 666, WASH-HIST-OP-5; entry 146; RG 226.

[50] Alsop and Braden, *Sub Rosa,* 7.

[51] See Jennifer Davis Heaps, "Clio's Spies: The National Archives and the Office of Strategic Services in World War II," *Prologue* 30 (Fall 1998): 194–207.

and the relationship of these records to possible future transfers.[52] State issued its formal, written offer of the records just three weeks later.[53] In further consideration of the offer, Roscoe R. Hill, the chief of the Division of State Department Archives declared "the problems involved in connection with this proposed accession of OSS material are numerous."

Hill outlined three obstacles, beginning by noting that the records consisted not of originals but of "various types of carbon or reproduced copies." Furthermore, the location of the original records could not be determined. The "reference character" of the records, which Hill deemed useful for research if only they were not classified, raised doubts as to their permanent or enduring value. Confessing that "not a great deal is known as to OSS," Hill consulted Alsop and Braden's *Sub Rosa.* From a review of their account, Hill discerned the distinction between the R&A Branch and what he called the "Cloak and Dagger branch," which really encompassed several operational branches. Hill had no idea what volume of records these two kinds of functions produced. Still, he gave no indication that he wished to have the National Archives refuse the offer, which would have been disastrous for the historical community.[54] Accordingly, in May 1946 the "OB" reports were the first of the R&A raw intelligence documents to be accessioned into the National Archives, the "L" reports soon followed in August 1946, the "XL" reports in February 1950, and the "regular" reports and index cards for the "regular," "L," "XL," and "OB" reports in February 1951.

By 1947 the battle over much of the remaining OSS files' integrity was lost despite an ongoing dialogue with the National Archives. Col. Knox P. Pruden of the War Department's Strategic Services Unit received 4,500 archival storage boxes that the National Archives provided the "OSS Archives Unit." The Archives apparently provided the boxes in the spirit of a verbal agreement between the OSS and the Archives during OSS liquidation. The agreement was that the records would "eventually" be transferred when "portions of the records [became] inactive."[55] However, in his appraisal of 3,000 cubic feet of records transferred to the Central Intelligence Group, chief of the National Archives' Army Branch Leo L. Gerald declared that "it is now impossible to tell how many of the records have been alienated to form a part of current records of the Central Intelligence Group." He further claimed that he had "insisted that this practice either be stopped or at least curtailed to the minimum." His plea was to no avail. Gerald urged the ac-

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[52] Philip C. Brooks (AO) to SD, 5 March 1946; RG 226 accession Job No. 446-244 #2158, 29 May 1946; in administrative records of NARA.

[53] E. Wilder Spaulding to Solon J. Buck, 26 March 1946; RG 226 accession Job No. 446-244 #2158, 29 May 1946; in administrative records of NARA.

[54] Roscoe R. Hill, Chief, Division of State Department Archives to Records Appraisal Officer, 12 April 1946; RG 226 accession Job No. 446–244 #2158, 29 May 1946; in administrative records of NARA.

[55] Knox P. Pruden to Solon J. Buck, 8 April 1947; RG 226 accession Job No. 447-C30, 12 May 1947; in administrative records of NARA.

cessioning of these records because they had value for the government and because they contained information "that ought to be of interest to scholars." He added that to ensure their preservation the records should be transferred to the National Archives "as rapidly as the Central Intelligence Group can be induced to release them." The interest that the "Archives Unit" of the War Department's Strategic Services Unit had shown in transferring some of these records seems not to have been continued by the new Central Intelligence Agency, formed just a few months after Gerald appraised the records. Five years later, after not having received any of the operational records, the National Archives closed its file on the prospective accession.[56]

Public Use of the Index Cards

Interest in seeing the records of the OSS existed from the time of the agency's demise. Because the State Department placed restrictions on access to the still-classified records, the National Archives initially made the R&A records available to researchers with appropriate security clearances.[57] Access to the operational unit records held by the CIA was even more difficult, if not impossible. Until the 1970s, those who published books about the OSS (mostly OSS veterans) did so without the use of OSS records. In fact, one OSS veteran, Donald Downes, wrote in his preface to fellow OSS veteran Peter Tompkins' 1962 book about OSS experiences in Italy, that "I dare say there is no record of Peter's mission in the archives of the United States Government. There was none in the autumn of 1944 when I was writing special intelligence reports inside the White House Offices and had Presidential access to all government intelligence files, including those of OSS. Why? Because information unpalatable to the brass had a way of disappearing." Despite this assertion, at least some record of Tompkins' service, including one of his own reports in which he posed as an Italian archivist, is found in the OSS records.[58] Several years later, a former CIA employee, R.

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[56] Leo L. Gerald, Chief, Army Branch to E. G. Campbell, Director, War Records Office, 24 April 1947; RG 226 accession Job No. 447-C30, 12 May 1947. Also, Knox P. Pruden, Colonel, AGD Adjutant, SSU, to Solon J. Buck, Archivist, The National Archives, 10 April 1947; RG 226 Job No. 447-320 #2577, 7 July 1947; in administrative records of NARA.

[57] Efforts to prepare an official history of the OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, which was not published until 1976, were already under way. William Langer provided to Kermit Roosevelt some very candid comments on the section of the history dealing with R&A. Shortly after the war ended he already was rather philosophical about R&A and the difficulties it had faced. He noted, "Anyone who has had experience in the higher reaches of the government bureaucracy knows that budgetary difficulties, space problems, personnel allocations, job classifications and similar 'headaches' are of the very essence of the job." He believed that every supervisor was likely to have felt overburdened and that there were never enough resources for the tasks to be accomplished, but "all this is part and parcel of a desperate war effort." Cited in "The Research and Analysis Branch," 1 March 1947, 2–3, attached to William L. Langer to Kermit Roosevelt, 5 March 1947; folder 666, WASH-HIST-OP-5; entry 146; RG 226.

[58] Peter Tompkins, *A Spy in Rome* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), 11. Records relating to Tompkins are located in folder 30, WASH-REG-AD-07; entry 92; RG 226.

Harris Smith, undertook a major study of the OSS without access to OSS records. Smith said, "My former employers made it clear to me at the outset that the classified OSS archives would not be available to me." Therefore, Smith had no choice but to depend on reminiscences to write his book.[59]

The increasing proliferation of classified government information and public requests for access to it led to passage of the Freedom of Information Act in 1966, which was subsequently strengthened in 1974. Within a few years of the publication of Smith's book, CIA personnel reviewed the R&A records in the National Archives for declassification, which subsequently led to the release of many of these records to the public.[60] However, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) did not accession the records of the CIA's OSS Archives until the 1980s and 1990s. Reasons of security made it necessary for the CIA to retain the finding aids for those records. About 75 percent of the OSS records met the test of records having enduring value, as opposed to approximately 2 to 3 percent of most government records created.

Use of the OSS operational records in the course of work by its succeeding agencies altered the original files arrangement and some records series became mixed over time, a phenomenon not unique to the OSS records. The mixing of records series has not negated the usefulness of the records, however, because NARA subsequently undertook an extensive description initiative with the assistance of volunteers in order to facilitate access in the absence of the original finding aids. Still, as one archivist has noted, the CIA was the "first national intelligence agency ever to release its once-classified records for research," albeit those of its predecessor, at a volume of approximately 7,000 cubic feet of textual and audiovisual materials.[61] Researchers have consistently consulted these records ever since. Bradley F. Smith has said, "Never before have scholars been able to see, study, and

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[59] R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1972), xi.

[60] Unfortunately, some of the cards were selectively sanitized with black markers at an unknown point in their history. The marked-out information usually identified sources. Other cards have been withdrawn because they contain information that has remained sensitive. Those cards have been replaced in the open file with cards that indicate the document number, decimal, subject heading, and date.

[61] Lawrence H. McDonald, "The OSS and Its Records," in Chalou, *The Secrets War*, 78–102. The quotation is on p. 97. This essay provides useful details on the NARA accessioning and description efforts for OSS operational records. Many of the OSS records relating to R&A consulted for this article are located in entries 145 and 146 accessioned in the 1980s and located from the folder lists that NARA created for these records series. In addition, Timothy P. Mulligan, "The OSS and the Nazi Occupation of the Baltic States, 1941–1945: A Note on Documentation," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 13(1), 1982, 53–58, illustrates the usefulness of the index cards in area studies.

ponder the raw record of what an intelligence/covert operations organization did and how it did it."[62]

At least one scholar has gone on record regarding the differences between access to R&A and OSS operational branch records. Richard Breitman has said of the R&A "agency-created indexes" that "they are not very good for historical research" because of the length of time required to pore through the index cards. Only after going through the cards can a researcher request the individual intelligence reports on a particular topic of interest. Breitman conceded that "a knowledgeable archivist can help you a good deal, but from the index you cannot quickly and simply find specific information you are seeking."[63] Thus, a contemporary researcher's concept of what is quick access is very different from that of a World War II intelligence agency! While more pleased with NARA's efforts to create a computer-based index of OSS operational records, Breitman has expressed disappointment that the indexing information came from folder lists, not individual records in the folders. The limitations of the manual index cards and the computer printouts, however, led him to advise others who seek to do research using OSS records to go through all records in a series "document by document, preferably in chronological order."[64] He advocated, in effect, that there is no substitute for actually going through the records themselves if one has the time to do so.

Others may agree about the tedium of using the index cards, but most researchers of the OSS and wartime subjects have found the cards crucial to their work. In response to the cards' popularity, NARA conducted a pilot project in the mid-1980s to electronically scan a small sample of the index cards to try to improve access and speed delivery to the public by making the information available electronically. A British firm, OPTIRAM, implemented the project using optical character recognition (OCR) technology, with some success. Some within NARA thought imaging technology ideal in duplicating the character of the cards as much as possible, but at the time there was some difficulty with the cards' various idiosyncrasies, including their colors, various inks, typefaces, and occasional handwritten material (in pencil or ink). Converting the cards to ASCII text would have been a useful alternative, but there were other concerns about creating electronic versions of sensitive foreign government information contained on some of the cards.[65] Technological

[62] Bradley F. Smith, "The OSS and Record Group 226: Some Perspectives and Prospects," in Chalou, *The Secrets War*, 360.

[63] Richard Breitman, "Research in OSS Records: One Historian's Concerns," in Chalou, *The Secrets War*, 103.

[64] Breitman, "Research in OSS Records," 106.

[65] This information is based on interviews in Washington, D.C., with NARA staff members William Holmes, 6 January 1989; Robert Wolfe, 22 February 1989; Marie Allen, 22 February 1989 (telephone conversation); and Edwin Alan Thompson, 23 February 1989.

improvements to digitization of records and elimination of the cards' linger-
ing sensitivity issues since the pilot project might make feasible revisiting the
question of scanning the cards to enhance their preservation and access.
Searchable fields would be required, set up by intelligence report number,
decimal number, and subject heading, however, the resources necessary to
complete such a project, with its attendant checks on accuracy of the infor-
mation, would be formidable. Full-text searching would be ideal. If it were
possible, the result would be better access at a faster rate by eliminating the
need to request the manual index. An automated index would allow research-
ers to request reports of interest more directly, and completion of microfilm-
ing the reports also would facilitate access to the public.

Conclusion

We can only guess the extent to which the OSS R&A Branch and the
CID may have imagined any future research use of their records after World
War II. The OSS general counsel's office explored issues related to the pub-
lishing of OSS's official history, and records demonstrate that the OSS studied
National Archives circulars relating to records administration.[66] Most govern-
ment offices, then as now, created and maintained their records to conduct
their business as required by law and necessity. Repeated CID efforts to keep
track of OSS records demonstrated the seriousness with which the OSS re-
garded information dissemination long before the "information age" of to-
day. But mistakes were still made and some intelligence reports perished
despite CID's efforts. In those cases, it is possible that abstracts on the index
cards preserve at least a small part of that lost information. The overall record
of the OSS is, however, extant and mostly declassified, permitting us a glimpse
of Goering's drug habit and thousands of other subjects bearing on the war.

Since World War II, the integrity of the government and its activities,
particularly its intelligence efforts, has increasingly been questioned. The
public has come to demand access to records of their government not as a
privilege, but as a right, and records are being asked to fulfill functions that
their creators never intended or anticipated. When reflecting on gaps in
documentation, it may be well to consider the example of the OSS and its
records in remembering that in a world of human beings, records, and in-
formation, perfection cannot be achieved. Only when the stewards of each
stage in the records life cycle strive to maintain the integrity of records to

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[66] In addition to the publications cited earlier, other influential works in the archival field appeared
in the OSS files. The National Archives' Records Administration Circular No. 2, February 1943,
entitled "Current Aspects of Records Administration" included articles by Philip C. Brooks on "The
Archivist's Concern in Records Administration," Willard F. McCormick's "The Control of Records,"
Robert H. Bahmer's "Scheduling the Disposition of Records," and Harry Venneman's "War History
and Records Activities." The circular is located among OSS general counsel records in folder 522,
WASH-GC-OP-01; entry 146; RG 226.

the best of their ability can we hope to have a meaningful historical record to interpret.[67] Perhaps without realizing it, this is what the OSS achieved beyond its role as a pioneering intelligence agency.

APPENDIX: A Description of the R&A Index Cards

Of the R&A records in the National Archives, there are six series comprised of index cards or "Reference Cards." The largest and most often consulted are two series, together consisting of approximately 726,000 individual cards indexing intelligence reports covering the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions in various foreign countries.[68] (See Table 1 for a list of series.)

The cards, of various thickness and quality, measure four-by-six inches and are one of three colors: yellow, salmon, or white. The significance, if any, of these colors is unknown. The information consists of a CID-assigned intelligence report number, a subject decimal number, a subject heading, and a synopsis of the intelligence report's content, including number of pages, sources, and dates. The information on the cards is printed in blue

Table I. R&A (Formerly) Security-Classified Intelligence Reports and Their Indexes in Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services.

Records Series (Short Title)	RG 226 Series (or Entry) No.	Volume (linear ft.)	Wartime Distribution (outside CID)[69]
Index to Regular Reports	14	235.0 lf	CID reading room
Regular Reports I through 145317 Sept. 1941-Dec. 1945	16	887.2 lf	OSS staff & other agencies could borrow
Index to XL, L, OB Reports	17	65.0 lf	CID reading room
XL Reports XL1 through XL51493 Jan. 1944-April 1946	19	236.3 lf	OSS staff could borrow
L Reports L1 through L58678 Nov. 1942-Sept. 1945	21	199.5 lf	OSS staff could use in special reading room
OB Reports OB1 through OB29032 June 1943-Aug. 1945	23	102.5 lf	Unknown

[67] See Philip C. Brooks, "The Selection of Records for Preservation," *American Archivist* 3 (October 1940), 221–34. This article is an early articulation of the life cycle discussed as "life history."

[68] Box lists to the series of index cards discussed here are available to researchers from Modern Military Records, NARA, College Park, Maryland.

[69] J.W. Auchincloss to Major William Coogan, 19 June 1945; folder 494, WASH-IS-OP-17; entry 146; RG 226.

Table 2. Central Information Division Decimal Classification Filing Categories.

0	General
1	Political
2	Economic
3	Military
4	Naval
5	Aviation
6	Psychological and Sociological
7	Subversive and Countersubversive

ditto ink and the decimal numbers are printed in black typewriter or blue ditto ink. Each card has a space in the upper-left-hand corner that contains a reference to a CID intelligence report document number (including the prefixes "OB," "L," and "XL" where applicable), often followed by the letter "R," "C," "S," or "F." These letters denote the security classifications "restricted," "confidential," "secret," and "free," this last being the OSS designation for unclassified material. The synopsis of the intelligence report demonstrated its relationship to a particular category, illustrated the value of the information provided, and enabled the OSS analyst or other government researcher to determine whether the document would be pertinent in order to produce finished studies on a particular subject. Occasionally, the indexers added information to the index cards not available in the reports. Sometimes the reports and index cards contain cross-references to cards of indexed subjects written in pencil or blue ditto ink on the bottom, top, or back of the card.

Within each of the two principal series of index cards are three subseries of cards arranged alphabetically by name of person, country, or subject that are useful delineations for historical research. In most instances, a document is indexed under several categories. A given document about Benito Mussolini might appear under subject headings ranging from "Mussolini, Benito," and "Italy," to "Politics." Thereunder, the cards are arranged by a numerical decimal classification scheme loosely based on the Dewey decimal system, beginning with a range from zero through seven (0–7), followed by a decimal point and a set of one or two digit numbers.[70] (See Table 2 for filing categories.) Sometimes this is followed by yet another decimal point and another set of one or two digit numbers. All of the numbers stand for specific subjects. For example, the category for military information is 3. Army information by country is 3.11. A more specific decimal indicator is 3.11.2, materiel. Because the subject headings tend to be broad categories, the decimal numbers appearing in the upper-right-hand corner of each card are of further assistance in narrowing subject matter for researchers today, just as during the war.

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[70] Several federal agencies had been using variations of Dewey's system since the Taft Commission on Economy and Efficiency issued its report in 1912. See T. R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), 90–93.