

19 January 1980

HQ AFSINC/HNB
Kelly AFB, TX
78241

Sirs:

In reference to your letter of 29 October 1979, authorizing access to research classified SECRET Air Force historical records at the Simpson Historical Research Center, I request that I be granted further access authority.

As I explained in my original request of 1 September 1979, the purpose of this project is to present a historical account of the "Ranch Hand" defoliation project, as it was conceived in the United States and carried out in the Republic of Vietnam. In order to do this, it is necessary to cover the entire span of the project, i.e., 1961 to 1973. I specified this period in my original request and your letter of authorization also specified that I had access to records of this period. However, upon arrival at the Simpson Center, a question arose over the records of the 1970-1973 period since they were not ten years old and therefore were not "historical records." After a telecom conversation between personnel at the Simpson Center and someone at AFSINC, I was allowed access only to materials dated prior to 1970.

Not only does this interpretation deny me access to records which are necessary to providing a complete and scholarly conclusion to my study, but it also denies access to oral interviews taken after January 1970, even though the material discussed occurred in the pre-1970 period. Because the project is no longer a viable military weapons system, and in fact, has created some adverse publicity for the armed forces due to public misinformation, I feel that it would be in the best interests of the USAF to allow me access to materials on this topic in the post-1970 period. I realize that I could wait several years until the records become "historical," but I do not see any advantage in this to either myself or the Air Force.

In my research at the Simpson Center, I also determined that a number of documents pertaining to the "Ranch Hand" operation are still classified TOP SECRET or are in files which have this overall classification due to other materials. In several instances, I am aware of what the material is (through other sources), and know that the classification is either outdated or was originally misclassified (some of which I must admit to as the responsible party!). This is particularly true of materials placed in group 3, rather than in group 4 categories. In order that these materials

be properly reclassified, I request that either a security classification review of all materials pertaining to defoliation operations be conducted at the Simpson Center, or that I be authorized access to those documents in order to make specific requests for reclassification of individual items to the security officer at the Center. As an example, some three-month unit histories are classified as TOP SECRET, while reports covering the categories of items in other three-month periods have been declassified. I believe that in most cases, the current TOP SECRET classification of defoliation materials is as a result of other materials within the folder, rather than because there remains any actual information of this level pertaining to the extinct defoliation program. My request, of course, pertains only and specifically to information involving defoliation in Vietnam in the 1961-1973 period.

I would appreciate any assistance you can provide. Because of its impact upon my research, I will delay further visits to the archives pending your reply.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Cecil
Lt. Col., USAF (Ret)

PC/dr

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SERVICE INFORMATION AND NEWS CENTER
KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 78241



81 JAN 1980

Lt Colonel Paul F. Cecil, USAF (Ret)
1207 Ashburn
College Station TX 77840

Dear Colonel Cecil

This is in response to your recent request for additional information relative to the access we granted you earlier to conduct research in classified Air Force historical records (through SECRET).

Unfortunately, the provisions under which your access was granted are very specific. The material must be historical in nature, which means documents more than ten years old. Therefore, your current access is the maximum this office can authorize.

There are, however, procedures whereby you may request a review of the classification of a limited number of documents. We have attached a copy of Chapter III, Section 3 of Department of Defense Directive 5200.1-R, which explains the procedures for requesting a review of classified documents. We hope this information is helpful.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and wish you success with your Doctoral Thesis. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Paul K. Kahl".

PAUL K. KAHL, SR., Major, USAF
Chief, Magazine and Book Division
Directorate of Hometown News

1 Atch
Extract from DODD 5200.1-R

classified information that is permanent, valuable and in the possession or control of Components of the Department of Defense, including that held in Federal Records Centers and other storage areas, shall be systematically reviewed for declassification by the DoD Component exercising control of such information. Systematic declassification review conducted by DoD Components and personnel designated pursuant to paragraph 3-200c shall proceed as follows:

1. Information over which the Department of Defense exercises exclusive or final original classification authority and, in accordance with the systematic review guidelines developed under paragraph 3-201, is to be declassified, shall be marked accordingly.

2. Information over which the Department of Defense exercises exclusive or final original classification authority and that has been recommended for continued protection by the responsible reviewer in accordance with the guidelines developed under paragraph 3-201 shall be identified by category by the reviewer and referred through established channels to the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a Military Department, as appropriate. These submissions shall:

(a) Identify the information;

(b) Recommend classification beyond twenty years to a specific future event certain to occur or for a specific period of time not to exceed ten years or, in the alternative, recommend a subsequent review date not more than ten years later; and

(c) State the reason for the recommended continued classification.

3. The Secretary of Defense or Secretary of the Military Department as appropriate shall determine personally and in writing which category(ies) of information shall remain classified and the dates for automatic declassification or subsequent review. The Archivist of the United States shall be notified in writing of this decision.

4. Classified information over which the Department of Defense does not exercise exclusive or final original classification authority may be declassified only in accordance with the systematic review guidelines, promulgated pursuant to reference (c), of the agency responsible for the classification. If such guidelines are not available or authorized for use by Department of Defense personnel, the information shall be referred to the responsible agency.

3-203 Systematic Review of Classified Cryptologic Information

Notwithstanding paragraphs 3-200, 3-201 and 3-202, the Director, National Security Agency shall develop recommendations for the establishment of special procedures for systematic review and declassification of classified cryptologic information that shall be consistent, so far as practicable, with the objectives of the above-cited paragraphs. These recommendations shall be submitted to the Secretary of Defense for review and approval. Prior to implementation, these procedures shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office. Disapproval of these procedures by the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office may be appealed to the National Security Council. In such case, the procedures shall not be implemented until the appeal is decided.

Section 3—MANDATORY REVIEW

3-300 Information Covered

Upon request by a member of the public or a government employee or agency to declassify and release such information, any classified information shall be subject to review by the originating or responsible Department of Defense Component for declassification in accordance with this Section.

3-301 Presidential Information

a. Information ten or more years old originated by the President, the White House Staff, committees or commissions appointed by the President, or by others acting on behalf of the President, is, upon request, subject to mandatory review for declassification in accordance with procedures developed by the Archivist of the United States pursuant to reference (b).

b. Such information less than ten years old is exempt from the provisions of this Section.

3-302 Submission of Requests for Review

Requests for mandatory review of Department of Defense classified information shall be submitted as follows:

a. Requests shall be in writing and reasonably describe the information sought with sufficient particularity to enable the Component to identify documents containing that information and be reasonable in scope, e.g., does not involve such a large number or variety of documents as to leave uncertain the identity of the particular information sought.

b. Requests shall be submitted to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), the Military Department, or other Component most concerned with the subject matter that is designated pursuant to Department of Defense Directive 5400.7 (reference (q)) to receive requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act. These offices are identified in appropriate Sections of Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations for each Department of Defense Component.

3-303 Requirements for Processing

Unless otherwise directed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) requests for mandatory review shall be processed as follows:

a. The designated office shall acknowledge receipt of the request. When a request does not satisfy the conditions of paragraph 3-302a, the requester shall be notified that unless additional information is provided or the scope of the request narrowed no further action will be undertaken.

b. Component action upon the initial request shall be completed within sixty days (forty-five working days). If no determination has been made within sixty days (forty-five working days) of receipt of the request, the requester shall be notified of his right to appeal and of the procedures for making such an appeal.

c. The designated office shall determine whether, under the declassification provisions of this Regulation, the requested information may be declassified, and, if so, make such information available to the requester, unless withholding is otherwise warranted under applicable law. If the information may not be released in whole or in part, the requester shall be given a brief statement as to the reasons for denial, notice of the right to appeal the determination within sixty days (forty-five working days) to a designated appellate authority (including name, title, and address of such authority), and the procedures for such an appeal.

c. (Added) The head of the Air Force Information Security Committee (paragraph 13-301 (Added)) is the Air Force Appellate Authority.

d. When a request is received for information classified by another Department of Defense Component or an agency outside the Department of Defense, the designated office shall:

1. Forward the request to such Department of Defense Component or outside agency

for review together with a copy of the document containing the information requested, where practicable, and where appropriate, with its recommendation to withhold any of the information;

2. Notify the requester of the referral unless the Component or outside agency to which the request is referred objects to such notice on grounds that its association with the information requires protection; and

3. Request, when appropriate, that the Component or outside agency notify the referring office of its determination.

e. If the request requires the rendering of services for which fees may be charged under Title 5 of the Independent Offices Appropriation Act, 31 U.S.C. 483a in accordance with reference (r), the Component may calculate the anticipated amount of fees to be charged and ascertain the requester's willingness to pay the allowable charges as a precondition to taking further action upon the request.

f. A requester may appeal to the head of a DoD Component or his designee whenever that DoD Component has not acted on an initial request within sixty days or the requester has been notified that requested information may not be released in whole or in part. Within thirty days after receipt, an appellate authority shall determine whether continued classification of the requested information is required in whole or in part, notify the requester of its determination, and make available to the requester any information determined to be releasable. If continued classification is required under the provisions of this Regulation, the requester shall be notified of the reasons therefor. If so requested, an appellate authority shall communicate its determination to any referring DoD Component or outside agency.

3-304 Foreign Government Information

Requests for mandatory review for the declassification of foreign government information shall be processed and acted upon in accordance with the provisions of this Section subject to the provisions of paragraph 11-202.

3-305 Prohibition

No Component in possession of a document shall in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act or this Section refuse to confirm the existence or non-existence of the document, unless the fact of its existence or non-existence would itself be classifiable under this Regulation.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843

Telephone (713) 845-7151

28 February
19 January 1980

Lieutenant General Stanley M. Umstead, Jr.
Commander, Air University
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Dear General Umstead:

J. James
Earlier this month, I had occasion to use the facilities of Maxwell and of the Air University while doing archival research at the Simpson Historical Research Center. This was effectively my first return to a military facility since my retirement from the Air Force in 1974. I hope you will excuse my direct correspondence with you, but I wanted to express to you how very impressed I was with the spirit and attitude of the personnel at Maxwell. From club employees to BX personnel to the library staff to officers just walking in the school area—I found nothing but friendly smiles and cheerful greetings, despite some rather dreary weather.

I would especially like to compliment the people in the billeting Office. When I arrived, I was not even sure if retired personnel were authorized to reside in government quarters. Despite an extremely heavy workload due to the arrival of new attendees for several courses, billeting office personnel provided outstanding assistance in a very professional manner to everyone. I base this judgment on several observations over the period of a week, not just on one isolated instance.

Although their organization does not come under your command, I would like you to be aware of the very favorable image created by the members of the Reference Division of the Simpson Center. Dr. Richard E. Morse, the Division Chief; Mr. Pressley Bickerstaff, Archivist; and Ms. Francis Goodman and Ms. Lora Schnell of their staff, assisted me in a rather voluminous research project to an extent far beyond what I am sure their job descriptions envision. A number of other people also gave me outstanding assistance. I will, of course, also write Mr. James Eastman of the Simpson Center and the Office of Air Force History concerning the superior service rendered by these individuals. Because this division is the only contact with the Air Force for many civilian archival researchers, I believe that the favorable impression they give is of particular importance to the Air Force image.

There are a number of other examples of things at Maxwell that I could list which made me proud to be an "ex-blue suiter," including the excellent military bearing of the several Security Policemen that I observed at the entrance to the base. However, I also feel that there are two possible discrepancies you may wish to have looked at by your staff.

An invaluable tool for the modern researcher is the use of copying equipment. Because my time at Maxwell was limited, I had intended to zerox as much material as I could, rather than handscribe my notes. Thus I was pleased to find that although the Simpson Center did not have copying equipment, the Air University library provides two coin-operated copiers for patrons not authorized to use the "free" copiers. Unfortunately, there were service difficulties with these machines during most of my stay. The lady in charge of the responsible section indicated that these machines were only there as a ~~xxxvin~~ convenience to library patrons and that they library did not really have to provide this service.

I would suggest that since the Simpson Center is a primary archives for the Air Force, and will attract scholars whose subsequent writings will provide the public with particular views of the Air Force, the availability of adequate copying equipment on a fee basis is more than just an arbitrary convenience. More important to you, however, was the indication I received that these ~~expens~~ coin-operated copiers were put in the library without going through the normal contracting procedures. This may not be a discrepancy, but as a former member of the ATC IG team I was reminded of ~~xxmixxx~~ problems in this area in the past. I hope I am not out of line in suggesting that you may wish to have a member of your staff check into the allowable status of a civilian-owned profit-making concession on an active facility without contracting officer supervision.

I might also note that I was ~~xxxpx~~ surprised at the number of officers I talked to who had only a superficial idea of the purpose of the Simpson Center. Many seemed to think that it was merely a part of the library for storing "old papers" and "interesting pictures." This was particularly true among senior officers. I must admit, however, that as a professional historian I may be over-reacting to the comments of personnel who are much more concerned with the crisis of the present than the problems of the past.

In rereading this letter, I am afraid that it sounds more like an Inspection Report than the complimentary communication I intended it to be. Please be assured that I was very favorably impressed with both the facilities and personnel of your command. All too often we are ~~willing~~ more willing to go to the trouble of complaining than we are to ~~compliment~~ give praise. As an "outsider looking in," I felt that I had to take this opportunity to tell you what fine people you have and how proud it makes me to have been a member of the Air Force.

Respectfully,

Paul F. Cecil
Lieutenant Colonel
USAF (Ret)

Major General John W. Huston
Chief, Office of Air Force History
Bolling AFB, DC 20332

Dear General Huston:

~~Please excuse my direct communication with~~

In January, I had occasion to use the facilities of the Simpson Historical Research Center at Maxwell AFB for the first time and I wanted to make you aware of the outstanding services being rendered by the personnel there. I hope you will excuse this direct communication with you, but as a retired "blue-suiter" I am especially sensitive to how the military services are perceived in the civilian community. Because the Simpson Center may be the only direct contact with the Air Force for many civilian archival researchers, I believe that the favorable impression created by the individuals there is of particular importance to the Air Force image.

In particular, I would like to commend the members of the Reference Division, who are most responsible for the public's contact with the Center. Dr. Richard E. Morse, Division Chief; Mr. Pressley Bickerstaff, Archivist; and Ms. Francis Goodman and Ms. Lora Schnell of their staff provided friendly, enthusiastic assistance to an extent far beyond what I am sure their job descriptions envision. The positive attitude of all the personnel of the Center more than made up for any minor deficiencies in facilities.

I have written, of course, to Mr. James Eastman, Chief of the Research Branch, apprising him of the excellent reception I received. However, I felt that this was not sufficient. Normally, I am afraid that I am guilty(as so many of us are) of being ~~more~~ willing to go to the trouble of ~~extremizing~~ complaining than of praising. In this instance, it is a pleasure to give credit where credit is due. As the "boss," I know that you always get a first-rate reception, but I thought that you might like to know that at the Simpson Center this appears to be the rule for everyone.

Respectfully Yours,

Paul F. Cecil

28 February 1980

Mr. James N. Eastman, Jr.
Chief, Research Branch
Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center
HO R
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Dear Mr. Eastman:

Please express my thanks to the personnel of the Center for making my visit to Maxwell an extremely pleasant experience. I look forward to future visits and you may be sure that I will not hesitate to recommend the services of the Center to my colleagues in the field. The spirit of the personnel more than make up for any deficiencies in facilities.

Appreciatively Yours,

Paul F. Cecil

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
BOLLING AFB, D.C. 20332



26 MAR 1980

Professor Paul F. Cecil
Texas A&M University
Department of History
College Station, Texas 77843

Dear Professor Cecil:

Thank you for your kind letter of 28 February 1980 recounting your kind reception at the Simpson Center.

Mr. Cornett and his staff have been fully cognizant that they must provide comprehensive and courteous responses to the myriad of researchers and queries.

Having spent many years in a variety of repositories I share your view that those who assisted you are oftentimes the most significant direct contact between many in the scholarly community and the Air Force with the result that the institutional image is considerably enhanced by the dedication and professionalism of those in the Simpson Center.

I hope that your research proceeds well and that you will contact me if we can be of any assistance to you. My pleasure at your kind reception at the Simpson Center is increased by the fact that you were kind enough to take the time to tell me of your experiences at Maxwell.

I have enclosed a pamphlet describing some of our activities which you may find of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Huston".

JOHN W. HUSTON, Maj Gen, USAF
Chief, Office of Air Force History

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (ATC)
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112



27 March 1980

Lt Col Paul F. Cecil (USAF, Ret)
Department of History
Texas A&M University
College Station TX 77843

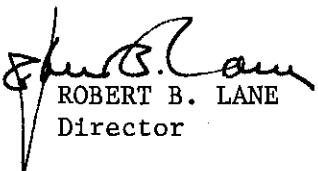
Dear Col Cecil

The Air University Chief of Staff sent me a copy of your letter of 29 February to Gen Umstead with a request that I reply briefly about our initiatives and activities as they relate to coin-operated copiers. This I will be happy to do, but first, let me tell you that we appreciate your observations about the excellent service you received from several AU organizations including the Air University Library while you were a recent visitor.

Now, with regard to coin-operated copiers, I believe we are on the way to a solution of the problem you surfaced. We do, of course, agree that these machines are in the library as more than a mere convenience. They are essential to the work of the serious researcher, and therefore must be in good working condition. We are working closely with the contractor to correct the quality deficiencies you found. In addition, we have established the necessary formal procedures supporting the presence of these machines in the AUL. The Chief of Staff has been informed about the ways in which this will be achieved, and we are working with the Air Base Group Director of Administration to effect the necessary approval of acceptable contractual arrangements.

I hope we may have the pleasure of serving you again. With all good wishes.

Sincerely


ROBERT B. LANE
Director



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SERVICE INFORMATION AND NEWS CENTER
KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 78241

11 JUN 1980

Lt Col Paul F. Cecil, USAF (Ret)
1207 Asburn
College Station TX 77840

Dear Colonel Cecil

This letter is to advise you that this office is currently in the process of moving from our location here in Texas to Arlington, Virginia. This move is being made to increase the efficiency of the office and permit colocation with the Air Force Central Still Photographic Depository.

Although the function is being transferred, the access program will remain unchanged and your current authorization is still valid. The only effect the transfer will have is that any future actions or questions relative to your access should be addressed to the new office. The address will be:

Air Force Office of Public Affairs
Magazines and Books
1221 S. Fern Street, Room D-116
Arlington VA 22202

We have enjoyed working with you in your endeavors and wish you continued success in the future.

Sincerely

PAUL K. KAHL, SR., Major, USAF
Chief, Magazine and Book Division
Directorate of Hometown News