

National Archives at College Park



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DAL
7/29/02

Date: July 29, 2002
Reply to
Attn of: Margaret Hawkins, NWML
Subject: Job. No. N1-373-02-03
To: Stakeholder Units

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) submits Job No. N1-373-02-03 (copy attached) to cover the hardcopy (paper) version of a collection of documents that U.S. troops captured overseas during Operation Desert Storm. The paper records covered by this schedule have also been scanned and placed on CD-ROMs. A separate schedule (Job No. N1-373-02-01) covers the scanned images and will be forwarded for stakeholder review once technical issues are resolved.

Background

The U.S. military captured 300 cubic feet of records in Iraq and Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. U.S. troops literally swept up these documents as they moved through Kuwait and Iraq, removing paper documents from every possible source, from buildings to the pockets of dead soldiers. The armed forces then turned these largely Arabic and Farsi-language documents over to DIA.

In the field, DIA had Arabic linguists review the documents and create English language "screening sheets" that contain a brief summary of the documents, control numbers, the type of document (notebook, manual, correspondence, etc.), the language of the original, and categories of information covered by the documents. DIA staff then scanned both the documents and screening sheets in TIFF4 format and stored them on Digital AudioTapes ("DAT tapes"). The linguists translated a limited amount of these documents in the field; the translations were scanned as well. At the same time, the staff developed a small database to track the records. This database formed the basis of a paper index that is still extensively used to access the records.

Beginning immediately after the staff began to process the documents until shortly after the war, DIA reviewed and exploited the collection for intelligence purposes. DIA produced approximately 495 Intelligence Information Reports (IIRs) based on these documents while U.S. troops were deployed in Kuwait and Iraq. These IIRs likely

include much of the important information contained in the collection. The complete set of all DIA's IIRs is permanent under DIAM 13-1, Item 1095. After the war, Armed Forces Reservists produced an unknown number of additional reports under DIA auspices. Others in the Armed Services and the intelligence community also produced reports, although no comprehensive list of reports generated outside DIA exists.

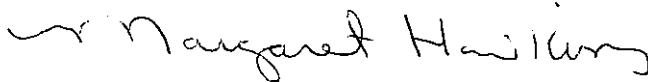
For the next several years after the war, both the paper records and the digital images remained in DIA custody and were largely unused. In the late 1990s the Department of State expressed interest in looking at some of the documents. At that time, DIA realized that the DAT tapes had become corrupted and that only 60% of the documents could be read. Also, the database used to track the records had become corrupted and was inaccessible beyond recovery, leaving only the paper index remaining. DIA commenced a scanning project to re-scan the 40% of the documents that had been lost. During the scanning project, several DIA staff members were taken ill due to exposure to the records. The Department of Defense conducted a test of the records and determined that the paper documents were contaminated with "U.S. origin mold" that can cause conjunctivitis, rhinitis, bronchitis, skin, rash, asthma, and hypersensitivity pneumonitis in susceptible individuals. A contractor then completed the scanning project, putting all images (including the 60% of intact images) in TIFF6 format with storage on 43 CD-ROMS. While scanning the documents, DIA also double-checked the accuracy of and updated many of the screening sheets. The entire collection was also classified at the Secret level.

The documents date from 1978 up until Operation Desert Storm (1991). The collection includes Iraqi operations plans and orders; maps and overlays; unit rosters (including photographs); manuals covering tactics, camouflage, equipment, and doctrine; equipment maintenance logs; ammunition inventories; unit punishment records; unit pay and leave records; handling of prisoners of war; detainee lists; lists of captured vehicles; and other military records. The collection also includes some manuals of foreign, non-Iraqi weapons systems. Some of Saddam Hussein's Revolutionary Command Council records are in the captured material. In addition, the collection includes records of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a body of six Persian Gulf states established in 1981 to provide long-range economic, social, and trade planning for the countries it represented. The CD-ROMs also include DIA's Intelligence Information Reports (IIRs) based on the collection.

This schedule covers only the hardcopy, paper records that comprise the collection. The schedule proposes the immediate destruction of these records after the approval of this schedule due to their contamination. I recommend approval of the proposed disposition. No matter what the potential future research value may be for this collection, the paper records are contaminated to such a degree that both DOD experts and NARA conservation staff agree that the collection could never be opened up to researchers. Decontamination would represent an enormous cost and the chemicals used for decontamination would also present significant hazards to both conservation staff and researchers. They are currently being stored in office space, and the agency would like to destroy them as soon as possible. DIA is requesting authority for immediate destruction

due to the health hazard these records represent. I recommend approval of the schedule as submitted. The imaged files, which are currently being proposed for permanent retention, will be handled under a separate schedule. The appraisal memorandum covering these records will include more detailed information about the potential value of the collection, the technical and access issues related to the records, as well as some examples of the captured documents.

I welcome the comments of Stakeholder Units.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Margaret Hawkins".

MARGARET HAWKINS
Lifecycle Management Division