



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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MMW
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From: Chief of Naval Operations (DNS-5), 720 Kennon Street SE Room 203, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5074
To: Mr. Paul M. Wester, Jr., National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001


Subj: RECORDS DESTRUCTION INVESTIGATION

Ref: (a) NARA ltr of 16 Dec 11

1. This replies to your letter, reference (a), concerning the records relating to the "Haditha Massacre" of Iraqi civilians recently discovered in a junkyard outside Baghdad. Discussions with the appropriate authorities at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) revealed that this incident has been addressed to determine whether an unauthorized destruction or removal of Federal records occurred. Their response disclosed that the HQMC Records Manager (ARDB) had reengaged with the legal authorities at HQMC Staff Judge Advocate (SJA). Subsequently, the SJA liaised with the US Marine Forces Central Command (MARCENT) SJA and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). This effort determined that the NCIS investigation has not yet been concluded and as a result information is not available for disclosure.

2. I can assure you that the Department of the Navy takes any accidental or unlawful removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of Federal records most seriously. This office will continue to monitor the progress of this issue to its final conclusion. We will advise you of the findings once we are permitted access to the investigation. If the records were destroyed or removed without proper authorization, we will provide you with a report of the efforts taken to recover the records and a statement about the safeguards established to prevent another like incident from happening in the future.

3. My point of contact for this issue is Kim Enright-LaMere, (b) (6) or (b) (6)


C. A. Barth
By direction

Copy to:
HQMC (ARDB)