

28 APR 1952

Colonel William d. Bessell, Jr.  
 Department of Mathematics  
 United States Military Academy  
 West Point, New York

Dear Colonel Bessell:

Receipt of your letter of 22 April 1952 is acknowledged.

I am glad to learn that no harm will come to me if I run a bit over an hour in talking about the Bacon-Shakespeare issue. I am a bit chagrined that I did not suggest a more appropriate title for the talk, since there are probably many persons who regard that as a dead issue and of no interest. However, I hope to exhume, if not reconstitute, the corpse. It might have been better to have suggested as a title "A cryptanalyst looks at literature," because I hope that by the time I reach the end of the talk I shall have gradually transported my listeners from the solid realm of Shakespearean writing to the ethereal stratosphere of "modern verse."

In introducing me, I trust you will be guided by my desire for brevity - I need the time myself! You might indicate merely that I have been in this "racket" (as General Canine calls it) over 35 years - longer than anybody else in the United States and possibly in the whole world; that my active participation in the cryptologic field, both as a civilian employee and a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, extends through two wars; that for my contribution to the winning of World War II, I was among the first to receive the Medal for Merit (only about 250 such awards have been granted since the order was established by General Washington); and that some of my colleagues refer to me as "Iron-man Friedman" because I have lived through the Battle of Washington for so long, am in good health and apparently still in full possession of my faculties - at least to a degree sufficient to permit my occupying the official position of Consultant to the Director of the Armed Forces Security Agency, an organization under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Anything more you wish to add from my personal history in American Men of Science or in Who's Who in America, you will add at your own risk.

It was most courteous of Colonel and Mrs. Nicholas to invite me to be their house-guest and I am writing them of my acceptance with pleasure.

Looking forward to an interesting and useful visit, I am,

Sincerely,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN  
 Consultant

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