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SECURITY INFORMATION

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

19 FEB 1952

Dear Colonel Bessell:

Upon my return to duty after a minor illness, I hasten to offer an apology for my inability to follow up more promptly on my letter of 21 January.

First, I wish to indicate my sincere appreciation of the invitation to lecture to the cadets of the Third Class at the Academy this Spring. I am, indeed, rather flattered by the terms in which the invitation is couched, and tender herewith an acceptance on my part.

However, since I am on the Government payroll and naturally wish to continue thereon, and, moreover, since I have no desire whatsoever to partake of the hospitality of any of Uncle Sam's better penal institutions, I must of course adhere to the rather stringent security regulations governing all activities in the field in which you ask me to lecture. Delicate and diffident reference is here made to Public Law 513, a copy of which is enclosed. Therefore, my acceptance of your invitation is subject to review and approval of appropriate authority, in view of which it is necessary that a formal invitation and a request that I lecture at the Academy be addressed to Major General Ralph J. Canine, USA, Director, Armed Forces Security Agency. Official acceptance of the invitation would mean that the presentation would be regarded as being official in character, with no honorarium involved; travel expense and per diem would be borne by this Agency.

Under our current regulations governing the classification of authorized presentations before Service Schools, I would be permitted to talk about cryptologic matters classified RESTRICTED, but no higher. I assume that among the students of the Third Class, and perhaps among the faculty members of the audience there would normally be non-USA cadets and officers; if that assumption is valid and should it be impractical or inadvisable on your part to exclude non-USA citizens, then my talk would have to be entirely unclassified in nature. This would be a bit of a handicap but could be managed, in view of my present thinking about the nature of the presentation.

In this regard, the sort of talk I would like to give would be one which I hope would make a lasting impression, the lessons of which might well be borne in mind long after the cadets have graduated and

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have assumed the responsibilities of active military careers. My thought here is succinctly embodied in the second paragraph of the statement of the purpose of your course in Probability and Statistics. It is highly probable that most of the graduates of the Academy will have some direct or indirect contact with cryptology in their future careers. An appreciation of some of the many pitfalls in cryptography may help them to play a proper role in maintaining the security of their own military communications; and an appreciation of some of the achievements of cryptography and cryptanalysis will help those graduates who may later on be in positions where the results of communications security and communications intelligence operations will be of great official significance to them.

Therefore, it is my present idea to give a more or less informal talk on the historical background of cryptology, selecting authentic examples to illustrate the part played in the past by cryptography and cryptanalysis in warfare and diplomacy. The talk would be fully illustrated by lantern slides. Of considerable interest, too, would be some exhibits I could bring with me by way of old and modern books on the subject, historically important cipher documents and devices, etc.

Your letter does not mention the length of the period normally allotted to a lecture. In other Service Schools it is 50 minutes. I could, of course, compress the entire talk into one such period but it would be better, I think, to have two 50-minute periods, with a 10-minute break between the first and the second. However, this may not be practicable because of scheduling or other considerations and if so, please do not hesitate to tell me, for I can "tailor" the talk to meet your requirements or desires.

By all means, I would want the talk to be informal and chatty in nature; hence, the Electricity Lecture Room appears much better suited to the purpose than the Department of Army Theater, even though it would mean that I would have to give the talk twice. This is a burden I would be glad to assume if it will be conducive to giving the cadets a useful and interesting presentation.

As you indicate, the details as to the plan of travel, hotel or VQ accommodations, and so on can be arranged later. At the moment the date mentioned by you, "on or about 28 May 1952," appears quite suitable for me. The exact date, or dates (if the talks are to be on two successive mornings) can be fixed later.

Please give my cordial greetings to Colonel Nicholas and to Lieut. Colonel Horridge, and tell them that if my visit comes off as planned, I hope to justify their enthusiastic recommendation in my behalf or, if not, to return the price of admission.

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In closing, I might add that your formal invitation need not go into details. It will be sufficient to state merely the purpose of the lecture, the approximate date, and the length of time allotted for it.

Sincerely,

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Public Law 513

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN
Consultant

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