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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
Washington

29 November 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTORS OF ARMY GENERAL STAFF DIVISIONS;  
THE CHIEFS OF ARMY SPECIAL STAFF DIVISIONS;

SUBJECT: Policy Concerning Release of Information from Historical  
Documents of the Army - With Special Reference to  
the Events of World War II

In the following memorandum, standing verbal instructions, which have been fully approved by the Secretary of the Army, are repeated for the guidance of the staff:

The Army possesses no inherent right to conceal the history of its affairs behind a cloak of secrecy, nor is such conduct conducive to a sound and healthy approach to the day to day performance of its duties.

The historical record of the Army's operations as well as the manner in which these were accomplished are public property, and except where the security of the Nation may be jeopardized, the right of the citizens to the full story is unquestioned. Beyond this, the major achievements with which the Army is credited are in fact the accomplishments of the entire nation. The American public therefore should find no unnecessary obstacle to its access to the written record. The history of the Army in World War II, now in preparation, must, without reservation, tell the complete story of the Army's participation, fully documented with references to the records used. The preparation of this history does not, however, constitute any reason or excuse for denying to the public immediate access to facts and records, where they deal solely with the operations of the Army, and where the security of the Nation is not involved.

In light of the foregoing I consider it appropriate to set forth as a guide, the following, which will govern the release to the public of information from documents pertaining exclusively to the Army:

a. Consistent with existing binding agreements with other agencies, and Governments, the maximum downgrading of all information on military subjects will be accomplished, except only when to do so would in fact endanger the security of the Nation.

WPC 313.5 Access to Records - Policy

b. All appropriate members of the Army Staff are charged with facilitating the efforts of individuals who desire access to military information of historical character.

3 || The foregoing directive will be interpreted in the most liberal sense with no reservations as to whether or not the evidence of history places the Army in a favorable light.

Dwight D. Eisenhower