

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

12 August 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Systems Analysis Staff

VIA: Chief, Records Administration Branch

FROM: Records Administration Branch

STAT

SUBJECT: Survey of Procedures at the Agency Archives 25X1

1. A survey of procedures in use at the Agency Archives was scheduled for the period 11 July - 1 September 1977. Because of the many substantive and procedural changes in records management throughout the Federal Government that have occurred within the last one-two years, it became obvious within a short time after the start of the survey that most of the procedures at the Archives were badly out of sync with current requirements. Therefore, rather than try to record and evaluate out-of-date procedures, it was decided that a more useful approach would be to focus on recommending changes that would make procedures more compatible with those changes in the Agency Records Management Program that are required by federal law. 25X1

2. The following activities and procedures were of particular interest and concern and are symptomatic of the general conditions existing at the Agency Archives. 25X1

a. Absence of Written Procedures

The Agency Archives has operated under a loosely knit collection of unwritten procedures that has been developed in an ad hoc fashion over the past ten years. These procedures have been modified or changed as new requirements emerge or old ones disappear, but such modifications and changes are subject to wide variations in individual interpretation as management of the facility changes hands. No systematic review, revision, coordination, and publication of procedures has ever been undertaken.

25X1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIALRecommendation

Task the Chief, Archives Branch to prepare written standing operating procedures for the routine, daily functions of the Agency Archives. Additionally, Chief, Archives Branch should be tasked to prepare a draft HHB on archival activities for coordination with RAB. Publication of these two documents would provide uniform instructions to both employees and customers of the Agency Archives on the proper use of the facility. These documents should be prepared immediately.

b. Questionable Methods of Accessioning Records

At present, records are being accessioned by the Agency Archives in three different ways:

(1) Transfers from the Agency Records Center. Records that have been in the Records Center for ten or more years, that are identified on the records control schedule as permanent records, and that have low reference volume are transferred to the Agency Archives. This method is not being pursued at present.

(2) Special Offerings. A component records management officer or other individual may believe some records to be of permanent value and offer them to the Agency Archives for retention. The Chief, Agency Archives and Records Center may concur with the opinion of the RMO and unilaterally decide to accession such records into the Archives.

(3) Initial Distribution. Record copies of finished intelligence reports and directives series are automatically sent to the Agency Archives by P&PD/OL upon publication.

Recommendation

It is absolutely imperative that only those records that have been determined by the Archivist of the United States to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant continued preservation by the U.S. Government are kept in the Agency Archives.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The appropriate mechanism for determining proper disposition is the records scheduling process. Draft procedures for the Agency Archives should specify that forms for accessioning will contain the schedule and item number and description of the records being deposited. The accessioning unit at the Archives should inspect the records upon arrival to verify this information. NO records should be accessioned into the Archives unless they are either on an approved records control schedule or if unscheduled, listed on an SF-115 to obtain disposition instructions. "Special offerings" should not be permitted. "Initial distribution" of reports from P&PD/OL should be scrutinized and a determination made as to whether this practice should continue. There is merit to the proposition that it should be the responsibility of the originating office to see that record copies of permanent records are deposited in the Agency Archives. "Transfers from the Records Center" should be vigorously implemented to make much-needed space available for temporary records in the Records Center.

c. Filing of Duplicate Copies

At present, it is not unusual for the Agency Archives to receive four copies of the same report; a "hard copy" from the originating office, a "hard copy" from P&PD/OL, and, if microfilmed, a silver and diazo microfiche from P&PD/OL. Apparently, the original intent was to provide archival quality microforms in the expectation that the paper copy of a report could be eliminated to save space. However, before the paper copy can be destroyed, the microform copy must be verified for completeness and accuracy and this fact certified by a responsible official (41 CFR 101-11.503-2). Unfortunately, it does not appear that the microfilm now being filed has been verified, as required by law. Thus, the Archives, in the absence of any clearly enunciated policy, has filed both hard copy and the silver and diazo microform copies. In some instances, Archives technicians have even been pressed into doing file preparation for the microfilming.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Recommendation

Develop an Agency policy regarding substitution of microforms for paper copies of permanent records held in the Archives. This policy should address the question of what to do with microforms already filed and stored in the Archives. The need for verification must be recognized and a clear definition of "verification" must be provided. Ideally, the media for the archival copies of records should be specified in an approved records control schedule.

d. Inefficient Staffing Pattern

At present, there is a geographic division of labor within the Agency Archives, with archival technicians organized along Directorate lines. The result is that common functions (e.g., accessioning and reference) are subject to individual interpretation and application according to the needs and priorities of the individual technicians.

Recommendation

A separate memo was prepared recommending reorganization of the Agency Archives on a functional basis to insure uniformity of procedures and their application. The importance of approving this proposed reorganization cannot be overemphasized and immediate approval is recommended.

e. Lack of Comprehensive Research Aids

The Agency Archives is preparing only a minimum number of research aids. This is due largely to the organizational structure wherein each Archives technician has individual discretion and responsibility for the records of a particular Directorate rather than a functional responsibility. Thus, one technician may emphasize preparation of research aids and another may emphasize another aspect of his total responsibility. The present machine listing is also laboriously prepared on an outdated punch card system.

Recommendation

Initiate a feasibility study concurrently with one for the Records Center to seek a replacement machine system for the antiquated Electric Accounting

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Machine (EAM) now used to prepare the machine listing of archival holdings. The EAM, belonging to OCR, limits us to an 80 column punch card to describe each series or job of records and is clearly inadequate. One Archives technician should be assigned to work with RAB and ODP to devise an alternative system and to prepare/write the research aids.

3. Because of the shortened time for the survey and change in focus, this is not an all-inclusive report. In theory, however, the Agency Archives activity can be reduced to fairly simple, straightforward objectives. In the writer's opinion, the Agency Archives should be the repository for only the noncurrent permanent records of the Agency, until such records are transferred, as ultimately they must be, to the National Archives. Logic dictates that only the official record copy (or archival copy) should be deposited. The media of deposit should be specified in the records control schedule and duplicates should not be accepted for deposit, regardless of the media. The approved records control schedule (for unscheduled records, an SF-115) should be the mandatory and only vehicle to determine which records do or do not get deposited in the Archives.

25X1

151

STAT

cc: Agency Archives

CONFIDENTIAL