



OFFICE of
INSPECTOR GENERAL

Date : August 20, 2014

Reply to : Office of Inspector General (OIG)

Subject : Management Letter No. 14-17, Delayed Refiling May Put Records at Risk

To : William A. Mayer, Research Services (R)

The purpose of this management letter is to inform you management controls may not be adequate to ensure original records stored as refiles can be accounted for and safeguarded from loss at the National Archives at College Park, MD (AII). Refiles are those records which, for various reasons, have not been returned to their assigned storage folder or area. Some groups of records appear to have been kept as refiles for extended periods of time, and there have been two significant incidents associated with refiles at AII.

On June 11, 2014, the Holdings Protection Team (HPT), Security Management Division (BX) reported to the Office of Investigations (OI), Office of Inspector General (OIG) that on June 10, 2014, a staff member in the Research Services, Textual Records Division at Archives II (RDT2) discovered permanent records in a trash bin by the photocopiers in Room 2400. RDT2 staff determined the records were working files which had been accumulated by an archivist who died in 2008. Over the past several years RDT2 has been working to review and refile records accumulated by multiple former NARA staff as part of an orphaned document refile project.¹ The deceased archivist's refiles, and other orphaned records, had been placed on carts and stored in personal office space in Room 2520, and in Stack [REDACTED]. RDT2 staff began storing the orphaned records in Stack 250 shortly before the Federal Government shutdown on October 1, 2013.

Although both Stack [REDACTED] and Room 2520 have controlled access, they are both accessible by all RDT2 staff. A review of the Stack [REDACTED] and Suite 2400 access logs revealed no correlation between employees accessing Room 2400 and Stack [REDACTED]. Based on the accessibility of the records and the lack of security video footage, the OIG was not able to identify persons to interview.

¹The project is an informal initiative directed by the Access Coordinator, Research Services (RD). This initiative consists of part-time project work for various RD staff requiring them to refile documents sent to Archives II from other NARA locations in the DC area. This includes stray documents found in the research rooms.

Some of documents found were stamped with World War II era classification markings. They were removed and kept by BX pending review by the National Declassification Center (NDC). The NDC staff determined none of the documents were still classified and returned them to RDT2.

In 2012, RDT2 reported to BX and the OIG that two documents related to Heinrich Himmler were missing from the Archives II Treasure Vault. They were later located in a box of refiles in Room 2520. During the course of the investigation the NARA employee who last received the documents was found to have excessive amounts of personal papers in their work area. There was concern the Himmler documents may have become co-mingled with the employee's personal papers.

The examples provided highlight the potential risk of leaving orphaned NARA records over extended periods of time as refiles in stack areas and office spaces such as Room 2520. An assessment of record handling procedures in this area may be warranted. This letter is provided to you for whatever action you deem appropriate. As a result of these weaknesses this area may be the subject of an audit in the future. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me or [REDACTED].



James Springs
Acting Inspector General

CC: David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States (N)