

REQUEST FOR RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

(See Instructions on reverse)

LEAVE BLANK

JOB NO

NI-338-87-6 *P*

TO **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC 20408**

DATE RECEIVED

2/15/88

1 FROM (Agency or establishment)

Department of the Army

NOTIFICATION TO AGENCY

2 MAJOR SUBDIVISION
~~Inter-American Geodetic Survey and predecessors~~
US ARMY INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMAND

In accordance with the provisions of 44 USC 3303a the disposal request, including amendments, is approved except for items that may be marked "disposition not approved" or "withdrawn" in column 10. If no records are proposed for disposal, the signature of the Archivist is not required.

3 MINOR SUBDIVISION
DCSOPS (AS-OPS-MR)

4 NAME OF PERSON WITH WHOM TO CONFER

Marvin H. Kabakoff

5 TELEPHONE EXT

7-693-7216
8-273-7216

DATE

2/10/88

ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES

[Signature]

6 CERTIFICATE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

I hereby certify that I am authorized to act for this agency in matters pertaining to the disposal of the agency's records, that the records proposed for disposal in this Request of _____ page(s) are not now needed for the business of this agency or will not be needed after the retention periods specified, and that written concurrence from the General Accounting Office, if required under the provisions of Title 8 of the GAO Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies, is attached.

A GAO concurrence is attached, or is unnecessary

B DATE 12 Feb 88	C. SIGNATURE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE <i>Robert Print</i>	D TITLE Army Information Retention Manager
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7 ITEM NO	8 DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (With Inclusive Dates or Retention Periods)	9 GRS OR SUPERSEDED JOB CITATION	10 ACTION TAKEN (NARS USE ONLY)
	<p>Located at the National Personnel Records Center (Military), St. Louis, Missouri, are Army organizational records generally dating from the late 1940's through the 1960's. These records are now being reviewed for the purpose of determining their ultimate disposition. The submission of this SF 115 is a part of this effort.</p> <p>This schedule covers only those records located in NPRC created by the U.S. Army Inter-American Geodetic Survey and its predecessor organizations. Consequently, it is not applicable to current records.</p> <p>Unless otherwise noted, the disposition numbers cited correspond to those in AR 340-18.</p>		5 items

Justifying Memorandum for Standard Form 115 on Records of
U.S. Army Surveys at NPRC

This is one of a series of Standard Forms 115 covering the records of specific echelons of U.S. Army field units located in the National Personnel Records Center (Military) that have been offered to the National Archives for possible accessioning as archival. This SF 115 covers records created by the Nicaragua Canal Survey and the Inter-American Geodetic Survey between 1896 and 1963. Dr. John Hatcher did not specifically include these records in his summary of Army records at NPRC. The volume of this collection is almost 20 cu. ft.

The Nicaragua Canal Survey was the outgrowth of the Nicaragua Canal Commission which was designated by Act of Congress in 1895 to conduct a survey on the proper route, feasibility, and cost of construction of a canal in Nicaragua to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Even after the Panama Canal was completed, the idea continued that a second canal, closer to the U.S. borders, was a necessity for economic and defense purposes. From the late 1890's through the early 1950's, the U.S. collected and compiled hydrologic and meteorologic data bearing on the proposed canal route in Nicaragua, under the aegis of the Nicaragua Canal Survey; periodic reports were issued providing information on the country and the advantages of building a second canal. The functions of the Nicaragua Canal Survey were transferred to the Nicaragua Project of the Inter-American Geodetic Survey on June 16, 1952.

The Inter-American Geodetic Survey (IAGS) was organized in April, 1946, under the direction of the Engineer, Caribbean Defense Command. In 1952, it was designated as a major subordinate command of U.S. Army Caribbean. The basic mission of IAGS was the mapping of the nations of Latin America from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. Geodesy is the branch of applied mathematics concerned with measuring or determining the shape of the earth, or a large part of its surface, or with locating exactly points on its surface. To accomplish this, the IAGS had ongoing projects in 17 Latin American countries. It also operated a Cartographic School for the purpose of presenting short-term technician type training in cartographic subjects to selected Latin American personnel.

In each country, IAGS did military mapping, kept tidal gauges, and operated triangulation stations. It maintained close relations with the host government's official cartographic agency. The host government generally provided to the IAGS project free telephone, telegraph and radio services within the country, free railway service for personnel, and exemption from all duties and customs on normal import items. Each project prepared periodic reports on its activities for higher echelons. In addition to covering mapping activities, these reports often contained comments on the political and economic situation in the host country, as well as on IAGS's relationship with the host government, and the effect of the political situation on mapping projects. Among these reports are some from the IAGS Cuba Project in early 1959, containing data on the new government there.

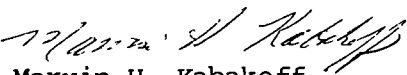
Because of the small volume of this collection and the valuable nature of the material, all Survey records were examined intensively for this SF 115. After

the appraisal is approved, the few disposable records will be screened out at NPRC, and the permanent material arranged by series. A box listing will be compiled and Forms 6710A completed for each series.

Additional comments on the appraisal and description of some series are necessary:

Item 1. General Correspondence. These files are arranged by the War Department Decimal Filing System and constitute the core of IAGS records. They do contain a small amount of marginal and archivally valueless correspondence, especially in the 100 and 200 levels. However, even here, the records document agency budget matters, financial arrangements with host governments, and recruitment of both U.S. and foreign personnel. The series also illustrates how the IAGS operated on a day-to-day basis. Hence, the whole series is being recommended for permanent retention. A sizable portion of the series consists of Operating Program Progress Reports filed under 319.1. During the screening process, these records will be separated and filed with the almost four feet of these records already arranged as a separate series.

Item 2. Nicaragua Canal Survey Data. This series consists of a wide variety of records, all from the same creator (or its predecessors) and all inter-related. There is no indication whether the bound, printed volumes are the record copies. However, since they appear to have been retired with the records of successor organizations, they may be considered as record copies, especially since there is no data on locations of other copies. The hydrology and related surveys comprise a large portion of this series; although they could be considered a separate grouping, they provide a continuation of the same data contained in the various bound reports. The types of hydrological and meteorological data contained in these records do have archival value, according to Dr. Martin Gordon, historian with the Corps of Engineers. They are used to calculate climatic conditions for a given geographic area. They also contain evidential value in documenting the detailed work which the Nicaragua Canal Survey was assigned to perform.


Marvin H. Kabakoff
Archivist
Military Operations Branch

Records Previously Appraised as Permanent

General Orders, ca. 1952-62, 2 in.

Operating Program Progress Reports, ca. 1954-63, 3.6 cu.ft.

Operations Planning Files, 1959, 1 in.

Organization Planning Files, ca. 1954-58, 2 in.

Items in this Schedule

1. General Correspondence
2. Nicaragua Canal Survey Data and Records
3. Maps and Drawings
4. Memorandums
5. Letters

1. General Correspondence, ca. 1952-56, 5.8 cu.ft., AR 345-220/18D

Letters, reports, memorandums, and other correspondence relating to a wide variety of functions and activities of the IAGS. The bulk of this series concerns the transactions and procedures documenting the day-to-day operations of this organization. Though sometimes routine in nature, these files illustrate what the IAGS did and how it operated. Much of the material is arranged alphabetically by country within a specific decimal file number. The two largest sections of the series are 319.1, consisting of project and progress reports from each country, including political data, and the 60 level, containing information on mapping in each country, reports on experiments with triangulation and magnetic observation, correspondence on aerial photography, and maps. Decimal number 0.7 contains copies of articles relating to IAGS functions and mapping activities in various countries. The 100 level is generally routine, but includes information on financial arrangements with the host governments; file 353 provides data on the training of Latin American personnel and on training activities. The 400 level contains records on supply activities as a whole and by individual country, and documents the technical equipment needed for IAGS operations. The amount of routine material in this series is relatively small and scattered. The series as a whole provides the only complete documentation of IAGS activities.

Permanent. Offer to NARA immediately upon approval of this schedule.

2. Nicaragua Canal Survey Data and Records, ca. 1896-1955, 7 cu.ft.

Reports, studies, hydrological data, and other correspondence created by the Isthmian and Nicaragua Canal Commissions, later superseded by the Nicaragua Canal Survey. The earliest records consist of published bound volumes containing the final reports of the U.S. Board of Engineers (1896), the Nicaragua Canal Commission (1897-99), and the Isthmian Canal Commission (1899-1901), all relating to ascertaining the proper route, feasibility, commercial and military value, and cost of construction of a canal across Nicaragua. These reports contain, variously, histories of the region and copies of treaties; hydrological, meteorological, topographical, and geological data relating to the proposed route; photographs, maps, and rainfall and river depth charts and graphs.

Later records include a report of the Interoceanic Canal Board (1929-31) on the practicability and cost of providing additional locks at the Panama Canal and of constructing a canal across Nicaragua; this report contains studies of potential shipping, hydrologic and meteorological data, and an epidemiological study of Nicaragua. A similar report from the same period was prepared by Lt. Col. Sultan, Officer-in-Charge of the Survey; this contained a history of field work and the project, physical characteristics of the route, and construction features.

Much of this series consists of hydrological and meteorological charts and graphs, showing humidity, rainfall, evaporation, temperature, and river depths at sites all over Nicaragua from 1919 to 1955.

This series is therefore an invaluable source of documentation of one aspect of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua over a period of 60 years.

Permanent. Offer to NARA immediately upon approval of this schedule.

3. Maps and Drawings, ca. 1896-1955, 2 cu.ft., 1513-01B

Basic topographic data files created by the Nicaragua Canal Survey and consisting of maps, charts, blueprints, and drawings of the proposed route of the Nicaragua Canal. These materials contain, variously, depth soundings and hydrographic data; topographic maps, some listing types of terrain to be found along the route of the proposed canal; and project railway and highway routes. Some are simply maps of portions of Central America. All of these items were created between 1896 and 1955; the most recent are generally copies of older maps and blueprints.

Permanent. Offer to NARA immediately upon approval of this schedule.

4. Memorandums, ca. 1952-62, 7 in. 227-01B

Numbered and unnumbered near-print issuances of the IAGS, used for a variety of routine purposes, generally relating to short-term administrative procedures. Included are subjects not normally covered, such as civilian travel and information on mapping, but these topics are covered more thoroughly in other series in this schedule, such as General Correspondence. Hence, none of the memorandums can be considered to have archival value.

Destroy immediately upon approval of this schedule.

5. Letters, ca. 1952-58, 3 in., 227-01B

Unnumbered near-print issuances of the IAGS used to advise subordinate sections of changes in policies or to outline routine, housekeeping procedures. These very often contain types of instructions found in the Daily Bulletins issued by other Army organizations.

Destroy immediately upon approval of this schedule.