



February 28, 2017

Mrs. Luz Ortiz  
OSD Records Administrator  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Washington Headquarters Service  
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 02F09-02  
Alexandria, VA 22350-3100

Dear Mrs. Ortiz:

In a letter to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) dated November 3, 2009, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) reported the unauthorized destruction of email records of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq maintained on a file server in Arlington, Virginia. The file server and the associated hard drives were destroyed when the server room was cleared for additional office space. The letter also indicated that OSD has implemented safeguards to prevent a recurrence of such a loss, including the tracking of servers and the data on them and the requirement for multiple levels of review prior to the destruction of servers. The file server maintained an estimated 1.5 terabytes of email and shared drive files originally captured on 16 digital linear tapes (DLTs) in May 2004 from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq.

On February 23, 2010, OSD informed NARA that the original tapes, which were presumed destroyed, were located and in the possession of the Department's Records and Declassification Division. OSD informed NARA that they would be working to recover the records since the version of Microsoft used in 2004 was no longer on their system. In 2011, OSD hired a contractor that successfully recovered data from four of the DLTs that contained (1) unclassified email, (2) classified email, (3) unclassified shared drive files, and (4) classified shared drive files. This resulted in the pre-accessioning in 2012 of all the email records captured on the DLTs and stored on the server that OSD reported destroyed. No shared drive files were pre-accessioned from the recovery effort. In a meeting between NARA and OSD in November 2012 to discuss the recovery of the four DLTs, OSD agreed to seek funding to process the remaining 12 DLTs (5 classified, 7 unclassified).

In 2015, OSD informed NARA that they were seeking a new company to continue the DLT recovery effort since the original company no longer handled classified data. OSD issued the contract for this work in August 2016, and on January 10, 2017, they reported that the evaluation of the DLTs was completed and that recovery of the 5 classified DLTs would begin that week.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and*  
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

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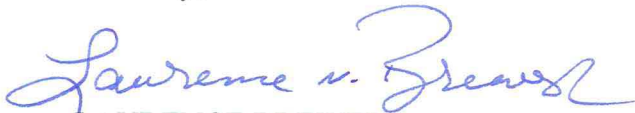
It should be noted that the CPA records schedule (Job Number N1-330-05-001) was approved on June 27, 2005, and called for the pre-accessioning of permanent electronic records upon approval of the schedule. The schedule primarily covered a collection of over 200 cubic feet of paper records and over 400,000 scanned (pdf) images of these paper records. The scanned images were pre-accessioned in 2006; however, the 1.5 terabytes of captured electronic information is also subject to the schedule and it was OSD's responsibility to determine if the information was duplicated in the scanned hard copy records. By October 2009, when the file server was confirmed to have been destroyed, this work had not yet been completed.

Pursuant to the approved records schedule, OSD is still responsible for the recovery of the twelve remaining DLTs and the determination of whether there are any permanent records contained on them that need to be pre-accessioned. NARA requests that OSD provide a quarterly update to NARA as to the status of the recovery effort and the identification of any permanent records for pre-accessioning.

As a result of all the CPA email records OSD originally reported as destroyed having been recovered and pre-accessioned to NARA, along with the institution of safeguards to prevent the inadvertent destruction of file servers, NARA is now closing the related unauthorized disposition case, but will continue to monitor OSD's progress in the recovery effort of the 12 remaining DLTs and pre-accessioning of any permanent records as required by the schedule.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Jobson at 301-837-2977 or by email at [scott.jobson@nara.gov](mailto:scott.jobson@nara.gov).

Sincerely,



LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government