

# Preface

This book is about two different things. First, it started with the rediscovery of a series of a dozen articles written in 1927 on contract for *Collier's Weekly Magazine* about the cryptographic section of the Military Intelligence Division of the US Army during World War I by John Matthews Manly, a member of that division. These articles were never published, and they disappeared until recently, when copies were discovered in the William F. Friedman Collection at the George Marshall Foundation Research Library in Lexington, VA. The book describes how the articles were written, how they ended up in the Friedman Collection, and what they contain. The articles are presented; edited for grammatical, factual, and spelling mistakes (but spelling conventions from the 1920s are retained); and annotated to provide a context for their contents. The articles themselves contained no citations or bibliography, so these have been added where possible.

The second thing this book attempts to do is to put cryptology, particularly American cryptology, in the context of World War I. America was late in many ways in getting to the Great War. American cryptologists had to work very hard to catch up with their European counterparts who already had 3 years of experience in using code and cipher systems in a modern war by the time the Americans arrived in France in the summer of 1917.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I tells the story of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), how it was organized and how it got to France, and gives us a peek into the military intelligence operations within the AEF during 1917 and 1918. For the entire 19 months that America participated in the Great War, the AEF was playing catch up to the Allies who had already been fighting for 3 years by the time that the first Americans arrived on the Western Front. The military intelligence organization was no different. A separate command from MI-8 (which handled domestic and diplomatic intelligence), the military intelligence unit in the AEF, designated G2-A6, had to be built from scratch and in the beginning was largely trained by their British and French counterparts. Manly provides us with insight into its operations and problems in three articles plus a separate essay to set the story for us.

Part II tells the story of MI-8 (Section 8, “The Code and Cipher Section,” of the Military Intelligence Section of the Army General Staff), how it was organized and functioned, and how it dealt with domestic correspondence during the war. These articles focus on German espionage and civilian correspondence, including secret messages from German POWs interned in the United States. We learn how MI-8 acquired its intercepted messages, some techniques of decryption, and how MI-8 worked with the military intelligence counterespionage units within the Army.

Part III engages us with German efforts, largely through spies and sabotage, to hinder the supplying of American arms and ammunition to the Allies in the first 3 years of the war when the United States was still officially neutral. It’s the story of German espionage and sabotage in the United States during the war. This includes a spy ring operating in New York, but run by German diplomats and embassy staff out of the German Embassy in Washington. It’s the story of an unprepared German intelligence establishment trying to recruit competent spies and saboteurs in Germany and the United States and largely failing. Overall, the Germans were more an amateur or semipro team than an experienced group of professional intelligence agents. This story’s central character is the infamous, but largely ineffective, female German spy Madame Marie de Victorica.

Finally, Part IV wraps up the narrative and brings the story back to John Manly.

Manly’s articles provide us a window into his experiences in this environment, and the additional chapters attempt to flesh out the American experience in the war on both sides of the Atlantic. There is enough material in the various archives, even restricting ourselves mostly to cryptology, for several volumes. My hope is that this work will do justice to John Matthews Manly’s contributions to the war effort and give the reader some insight into America’s role in the last phase of the Great War.

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