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OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
Executive Division
Mil Int. Branch.
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311.55 (Misc.Div.)

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JCA: SRS: LIM ⁷
WAR DEPARTMENT

War Department, A.G.O., May 10, 1919- To the Director, Military
Intelligence Division. *ja*

1-Incl:
(Synopsis made)

OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF
REC'D MAY 13 1919

REC'D, M. I. B., O. G. S. MAY 13 1919

Riverbank Laboratories
Geneva, Ill.

JUN 5 1919

4131-526

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WAR DEPARTMENT
May 7, 1919.*Department of Ciphers*311.55 (Misc.Div.)
CHA/AMSi).

From: George Fabyan, Riverbank, Geneva, Illinois.

To: The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D.C.

Subject: The report by Captain J. A. Powell to the M.I.D. on the ability of Riverbank to decipher messages of the A.T. & T. Machine Cipher System.

1. Correcting paragraph 5 of our letter of May 5th.
We are reliably informed that Captain Powell's report was sent under personal cover and addressed to Captain J. A. Manly of the M.I.8.
2. If the M.I.8 will attack this Cipher, we believe that they will have little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that it is not invulnerable, that it can be deciphered and that it will be extremely difficult to change the system or rather the machine to make it invulnerable.
3. When we expressed an opinion that the Wheatstone Cipher was weak and dangerous to use, the Cipher experts were skeptical and said it was absurd. We are informed that the system was discarded by the Associated Governments.

*Fabyan*27 Received 20, MAY 10 1919
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WAR DEPARTMENT

Department of Ciphers

May 5, 1919.

311.55 (Misc. Div.)
CHA/AMSi).

From: George Fabyan, Riverbank, Geneva, Illinois.

To: The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

[Subject: ~~Warning to the Department for the good of the service~~
that the A. T. & T. Co. machine cipher is not invulnerable, and does not give the security claimed for it by the Department experts.]

1. Riverbank has no desire to have any controversy with the Department as to the merits of any cipher employed by them, beyond expressing an opinion which we believe to be for the good of the service.
2. We venture the opinion that Riverbank has had the time to devote to attacking this system which probably has been lacking on the part of the Government experts.
3. Since we called the attention of the office of the Secretary of War to the danger of the use of the so-called indecipherable machine ciphers, under date of March 23rd, 1919, we have had the pleasure of a visit from Capt. J. A. Powell, of the M. I. D., who was in Chicago on special duty.
4. Capt. Powell is conversant with the A. T. & T. machine cipher system and we asked him to furnish us with four messages, using that system. Capt. Powell did so, under the impression that they could not be deciphered. They were deciphered within two hours, and the clear text given to Capt. Powell over the long distance phone.
5. Capt. Powell said he considered it his duty to notify the M. I. D., and to the best of our knowledge he did so.
6. We respectfully submit that it would be far more satisfactory for the Department to secure the opinion of one of their own officers in the service than from a source which seems to be questioned.
7. We believe it to be our duty to again state the fact that this system is decipherable under ordinary conditions.

Fabyan