

VF 108-13

IN REPLY REFER TO

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER
WASHINGTON

WFF:IHW

DIVISION

September 7, 1922.

Dear Mr. Byrne:

I was indeed sorry to note your very apparent dissatisfaction with my earnest attempts to give your cipher a fair test.

You will recall, I trust, that when you explained the workings of your device to Major Moorman and me, the model was very difficult to operate, giving doubtful letters and permitting errors to arise due to faulty operation of the model. You freely admitted the model to be a very crude one and had planned to build a more accurately operating model which you were good enough to promise to send so that I could have a clerk encipher a fair amount of text. Nevertheless, while awaiting this new model I spent some time on your old one, myself laboriously enciphering the message I sent you, with the results already shown. I really intended enciphering a good deal more text with the new model and kept on waiting, but none appeared. Hence, when you requested that your device be returned to you, I made a personal report based upon my findings reached "long ago", and I still maintain the same opinion based upon those findings in connection with the model furnished.

I am deeply regretful that the model reached you in a very bad condition, and I trust that you will not think I myself packed it. The box was labeled "Fragile" the clerk tells me, and he used the best box available.

With respect to your inquiry as to who is the Chief Signal Officer, I wish to inform you that Major General George O. Squier is the present Chief Signal Officer of the Army. My connection with the Signal Corps is that of an employee in the capacity of expert cryptanalyst. Your cipher device has been brought to my attention unofficially and has been handled entirely in that manner. If you desire to obtain an official decision concerning the availability of your device, you should address all communications to the Chief Signal Officer of the Army.

I trust that you have had success in building your new model. With respect to the amount of material I consider necessary for the decipherment of your system, I would say that a series of fifty messages of approximately twenty-five words each might be sufficient, providing they were enciphered upon a machine operating in principle exactly like the one I had. This is a fair number for military messages intercepted in one day's traffic.

Mr. Byrne (cont'd)

9/7/22.

In accordance with your desire, please rest assured that the details and operation of your device will be considered as strictly confidential.

Please permit me to reiterate my extreme regret for the destruction of your model by the postal service, due to the clerk's failure to pack the device more thoroughly, and also to express my hope that you will submit your new model together with such modifications as may have suggested themselves to you for official examination at some time in the near future.

Very truly yours,

W. F. Friedman

W. F. Friedman,
Cryptanalyst.

Mr. J. F. Byrne,
70 Wilson St.,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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