

F.No. IDS/43019//TRADOC/T&P/WH(PC-I) / 1803/D (GS-II)
Ministry of Defence
D (GS-II)

Room No.112, Sena Bhawan,
New Delhi-110011.

Dated 17th June, 2021

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject : Policy on Archiving, Declassification & Compilation of War/Operations Histories-reg.

The undersigned is directed to convey the approval of Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on the policy of archiving, declassification and compilation/publication of war/operations histories by the Ministry of Defence. The approved policy containing details such as Archiving, Declassification, Compilation/Publication of War/Operation Histories, Coordination, Composition of Committee, Timeline for Compilation/Publication of War/Operations Histories is enclosed herewith.

2. The responsibility for declassification of records rests with the respective organisations as specified in the Public Record Act 1993 and Public Record Rules 1997, as amended from time to time. According to the policy, records should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years. Records older than 25 years should be appraised by archival experts and transferred to the National Archives of India once the war/operations histories have been compiled.

3. The History Division will be responsible for coordination with various departments while compiling, seeking approval and publishing of war/operations histories. The policy mandates constitution of a committee headed by Joint Secretary, MoD and comprising of representatives of the Services, MEA, MHA and other organisations and prominent military historians (if required), for compilation of war/ operations histories.

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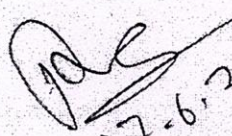
**Government of India Policy on Procedure for Archiving,
Declassification and Compilation / Publication of War / Operations Histories
by Ministry of Defence**

Archiving

1. (a) History Division, Ministry of Defence and concerned Ministerial/Departmental record rooms will be responsible for Archiving of Historical/Operational/War Records of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces.
- (b) Ministry of Defence, Services Headquarters, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, Assam Rifles, Headquarters Coast Guard or any organisation raised under Ministry of Defence, Government of India in future, (referred to as 'Record Creating Agencies' hereinafter), will transfer the Historical/Operational/War Records including War Diaries/Letters of Proceedings/Operational Record Books as well as make available all other records pertaining to training, manpower, procurement, etc., to History Division (Ministry of Defence), through respective History Cell/Division/ nominated branch/directorate of Services HQs for writing the histories and proper upkeep. The concerned Services Headquarters/other Record Creating Agencies may retain certain classified documents till such time it is felt that the contents may endanger national security. The records will be forwarded both in hard and soft copies. The soft copies are to be in un-editable format like pdf, etc., or submitted as scanned copies. All Record Creating Agencies are to maintain a branch-wise catalogue of records earmarked for preservation and send a copy of the same to the respective ministerial/service record room/historical sections. Nil returns are unacceptable.

Declassification

2. The responsibility for declassification of classified records rests with the originators of the records or Record Creating Agencies as specified in the Public Record Act 1993 and Public Record Rules 1997, as amended from time to time. For the purpose of this policy the time period within which records should ordinarily be declassified is 25 years. Keeping records classified for longer period can be an exception rather than a rule and each record so retained must be accompanied by a detailed justification giving reasons for withholding it. Records older than 25 years must be appraised by archival experts and transferred to the National Archives of India once the war/ operations histories have been compiled.


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Compilation/Publication of War/ Operations Histories

3. History Division, Ministry of Defence is responsible for compiling and publishing War/ Operations Histories. If outsourced to an external agency/Eminent Historian(s), Director, History Division, Ministry of Defence, will be the Member Secretary.

Coordination

4. History Division, Ministry of Defence will be responsible for coordination with various Ministries/Departments while compiling, seeking approval and publishing of War/Operations Histories.

Composition of Committee

5. (i) The composition of the Committee for compilation of War/ Operations Histories is as follows:-

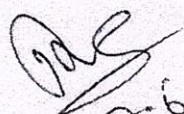
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| (a) Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence
(incharge of History Division) | - Chairman |
| (b) Director, History Division (Ministry of Defence)/
or Eminent Historian(s), if outsourced | - Chief Editor |
| (c) Serving representatives of all Services HQs | - Members |
| (d) Representatives of Ministry of External
Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
and other agencies (as required) | - Members |
| (e) Prominent Military Historian(s) (if required) | - Members |
| (f) Director, History Division, Ministry of Defence
(when compilation of history outsourced) | - Member secretary |

Official Secrets Act- 1923

6. All nominated members in the Committee will be governed by the Official Secrets Act- 1923.

War/ Operations Histories

7. A compiled War/ Operations History based on classified records would bear the appropriate security classification 'Secret or lower classification'. Once finalised, a copy of said History would be forwarded to all stakeholders in order to draw relevant lessons. The history should be declassified as early as possible and not later than 25 years from the date of compilation.


17.6.2021