

29 November 1945

Mrs. A. J. McGrail  
179 Acorn Street  
Springfield, Massachusetts

Dear Mrs. McGrail:

I hope you will forgive my tardiness in replying to your letter of last May. Shortly thereafter I went to Europe and was gone for several months. Pressure of official business has, of course, kept me occupied, but I have obtained the necessary data and have filled out the form for you to send to Harvard. I have kept a copy though so that later on I can write the narrative biography which I shall be very glad to do.

I am also returning two letters addressed to you in connection with the foregoing.

I hope that my letter finds you much improved in spirits and in health. With cordial greetings, I am,

Sincerely yours,

William F. Friedman

2 Inclosures:  
2 letters.

## HARVARD HONOR ROLL

Name: A. John McGrail

Years of enrölmnt and degrees: 1909 - 1913 A.B. magna cum laude 1913

Ph. D. - Catholic University of America 1916

Occupation in civil life Research chemist

Last employer or professional affiliation before service: Professor of chemistry, Providence College, Providence, R. I.

Date and place of entry into military service: 22 June 1918, Washington, D. C.

Branch of Service **Military Intelligence Division, National Army.**Rank on Enrolment **First Lieutenant**

0124328

Promotions, transfers; **Honorably discharged 28 October 1919; appointed Captain, Quartermaster Reserve, 10 January 1920; transferred to Military Intelligence Reserve 4 June 1920; transferred to Signal Reserve 21 March 1930; Major, Signal Reserve, 10 May 1941; called to active duty 25 May 1941; promoted to Lieut. Colonel, AUS, 1 February 1942, which grade he held until his death, 30 April 1945.**

**Legion of Merit (posthumous) awarded on 9 August 1945, "for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services" during World War II. Letters of commendation for specific important researches of highly secret nature in connection with intelligence work, details of which cannot be given at this time.**

**It is my belief that Colonel McGrail's untimely death is in part attributable to his zeal and excessive devotion to arduous duty over a period of four years; a tour of temporary duty in the European Theater in the winter of 1944-45, under very difficult conditions, so reduced his physical vigor that he succumbed to a sudden illness.**

Mr. William F. Friedman,

179 Acorn Street  
Springfield, Mass.  
May 23, 1945

Dear Colonel Friedman,

I want you to have THE AMERICAN BLACK CHAMBER to keep for yourself to do with as you like.

The future continues to look unbearably dark and empty without the one thing for which I lived. How does one find a pattern for climbing up out of despair?

I enclose a communication from the secretary of John's class in Harvard. May I have it back? You see there is no hurry about this at all and I want you to do it only if you have the time and care to.

Please remember me to Mrs. Friedman.

Sincerely yours,

*Florence McGrail*

Mrs. John McGrail

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WAR DEPARTMENT  
 Washington 25, D. C., 9 August 1945

GENERAL ORDERS }

NO. 65 }

\* \* \* \* \*

III---LEGION OF MERIT.--By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 20 July 1942 (sec. III, WD, Bul. 40, 1942) and Executive Order 9260, 29 October 1942 (sec. I, WD, Bul. 54, 1942), the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services during the period indicated was awarded posthumously by the War Department to the following-named officer:

Lieutenant Colonel Aloysius J. McGrail, 0124328, Signal Corps, Army of the United States. May 1941 to April 1945.

\* \* \* \* \*

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

OFFICIAL:

EDWARD F. WITSELL  
 Major General  
 Acting The Adjutant General

G. C. MARSHALL  
 Chief of Staff

1st Ind

MEE/ksf/elg/1508

WD, AGO, Wash 25, DC, 1 Aug 1945

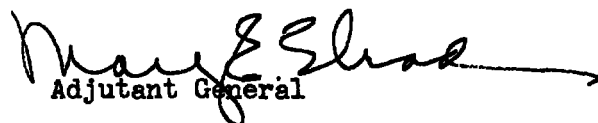
TO: Chief Signal Officer, Room 3C340 The Pentagon, Wash 25, DC  
Attention: SPSIS-4

1. The records of this office show that Aloysius John McGrail was appointed First Lieutenant, Military Intelligence Department, National Army, 22 June 1918; accepted 22 June 1918; honorably discharged 28 Oct 1919, by reason of demobilization.

2. He was appointed Capt, Quartermaster Section Reserve, 10 Jan 1920; accepted 2 Jan 1920; asgd serial number 0124328; transferred to Military Intelligence Reserve, 4 June 1920; reappointed 10 Jan 1925; accepted 10 Jan 1925; reappointed 10 Jan 1930; accepted 10 Jan 1930; appointed Capt, Sig Corps Res, 21 Mar 1930; accepted 5 May 1930; transferred to Sig Corps Reserve, 25 May 1932; reappointed 21 March 1935; accepted 21 March 1935; reappointed 21 March 1940; accepted 21 March 1940; promoted to Maj, Sig Corps Reserve 10 May 1941; accepted 16 May 1941; promoted to Lt Col, AUS, 1 Feb 1942; accepted 27 Feb 1942; and was a Lt Col, AUS, 30 Apr 1945, the date of his death in Arlington Officers Club Quarters, Arlington, Va.

3. He had the following periods of active duty as a commissioned officer: From 5 May 1929 to 18 May 1929; 12 June 1932 to 25 June 1932; 22 Jan 1934 to 4 Feb 1934; 5 Apr 1936 to 18 Apr 1936; 11 June 1939 to 24 June 1939; 15 Sept 1940 to 28 Sept 1940; and from 25 May 1941 to 30 Apr 1945.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

  
Adjutant General



HEADQUARTERS, ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

SPSIS-4

28 June 1945


SUBJECT: World War I Service Record of Aloysius John McGrail, O-124328

TO: The Adjutant General  
Room 1503, Munitions Building  
Washington 25, D. C.  
ATTENTION: Officers' Record Section

It is requested that the following information regarding Lt. Colonel Aloysius John McGrail, O-124328, deceased, be forwarded the Signal Security Branch, OCSigO, Room 3C 340, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D.C. Attention: SPSIS-4:

- a. Date and rank of first commission in World War I and of demobilization.
- b. Branch of Service.
- c. Chronological history of all assignments.
- d. Date of first commission in Reserve Corps and subsequent promotions.

FOR THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER:

  
JOSEPH W. JOHNSTON  
Lt. Colonel, Signal Corps  
Signal Security Branch

ALOYSIUS JOHN McGRILL, 0124328, Signal Corps

Captain Aloysius J. McGrail (Reserve Corps) entered on extended active duty 25 May 1941 as a Major.

Promoted to Lt. Colonel 1 February 1942

Assignments:

OCSIGO - Signal Intelligence Service: 28 May 1941 - 30 June 1942

Signal Security Agency, Chief, Operational Division: 1 July 1942 - 31 Dec 1942

Signal Security Agency: 1 January 1943 to 29 February 1943

Signal Security Agency - Chief, Laboratory Branch: 1 Feb 1943 to 30 April 1945

Deceased 30 April 1945.

*Promote: Major Signal 10 May 1941*

179 Acorn Street  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
May 12, 1945

Colonel Wm. F. Friedman  
3932 Military Road  
Washington D.C.

Dear Col. Friedman,

First let me thank you and Mrs. Friedman for your great kindness to me last week. I truly appreciated it.

Harvard sent me this form which I started to fill in. Realizing how little I know about John's war record I gave up. It occurs to me that only you can do it in a way that will be a credit to him. I think they mean it to be a record of the first world war as well as the second. I was thinking of such details as his connection with the embassy in Paris - his assignment to the Peace Conference. They love those things down in Cambridge. His two trips overseas in this war would add interest too. Is it permissible to mention that much of his work must go unreported? You can see that I would not do it well at all.



While you are making these notes would you care to keep a copy so that you could put it in narrative form for the next year book which will come out in a year or two. That is the way they handle the obituaries. There is not the slightest need for hurry on that form.

I wish we four might have met under happier circumstances- what pleasant times we might have had.

I have not yet returned to work - its very hard to put the pieces together. I shall always remember you gratefully as two people who helped me get through the darkest days of my life.

Sincerely yours,

*Florence McGrail*

Aloysius John McGrail was born \_\_\_\_\_. He attended Harvard University from 1909 until 1913. In 1916 he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Catholic University of America. On June 22, 1918, he was appointed First Lieutenant, Military Intelligence Department, National Army. He was honorably discharged October 28, 1919 by reason of demobilization. On January 10, 1920, he was appointed Captain, Quartermaster Section Reserve; and he was transferred to Military Intelligence Reserve on June 4, 1920. On March 21, 1930, he was appointed Captain, Signal Corps Reserve. He was a reserve officer with the Signal Corps when he was called to active duty on May 25, 1941 in the grade of Major. On February 1, 1942 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Prior to entering upon active duty in 1941, he was employed as Professor of Chemistry at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Lieutenant Colonel McGrail <sup>did</sup> ~~die~~ on April 30, 1945, at Arlington, Virginia. The Legion of Merit was awarded posthumously by the War Department on August 9, 1945.

11 May 1945.

Mrs. Florence H. McGrail  
179 Acorn Street  
Springfield, Massachusetts

Dear Mrs. McGrail:

In accordance with our conversation, I asked Captain Carnell to let me see John's copy of Yardley's book, *The American Black Chamber*, in order to ascertain if it contained notes which would make it desirable to keep the book here. Captain Carnell turned over the copy to me and I find that it does not contain any notes. I would, therefore, be glad to know what disposition you would like to make of this book. We would, of course, welcome having it in the library here, or I would be very happy to have it as a memento because it has his autograph in it. Whatever your decision, please let me know at your convenience.

I hope that you have recovered from the shock of John's sudden passing and that you will be feeling better in a short time.

Both Mrs. Friedman and I were very glad that we called on you and had the opportunity of being with you for so many minutes during the time of your greatest trial. If there is anything I can do down here, please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Very sincerely yours,

William F. Friedman

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Grail