

25 February 1952

Colonel Wm. W. Bessell, Jr., USA  
Head of Department of Mathematics, MADN-A  
United States Military Academy  
West Point, New York

Dear Colonel Bessell:

The long week-end delayed delivery of your letter of 19 February, and since I am scheduled to leave Washington at the end of this week, for about 10 days temporary duty down South, I hasten to get off this brief reply.

Your suggestion that the lecture be given on the morning of 28 May and be repeated on the following morning will, I think, be less taxing on me and better for the second audience.

Your assumption that it will be best for you to exclude non-USA students and faculty members, as well as faculty members' wives is correct. However, I have in this connection one suggestion to offer.

Last year, when I gave a classified lecture at the Air University, I learned that the wives of faculty members and student officers were anxious to hear some one talk on certain interesting sidelights of the subject of cryptography. I offered to give them a talk on the sorts of cryptography commonly employed by those peculiar persons who try to prove, by those means, that someone other than Shakespeare wrote the immortal plays. My offer was accepted and I gave the talk in the late afternoon. It was, I may say, very well received; the audience learned something useful, had a good time doing so - and so did I. Here, too, I used lantern slides.

Well, then, if that sort of talk would be of interest, I would be glad to give one at the Academy, in either the late afternoon or evening of 28 May - and, to set your mind at rest, at no financial cost to anybody.

There is no need to mention this "extra-curricular" talk in your official letter to General Canine asking for me to give the lecture before the Third Class.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN  
Consultant