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UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**(U)CRYPTOLOGIC ALMANAC****J. RIVES CHILDS(U)**

(U) One of the important cryptanalysts in the American Expeditionary Force in France in World War I also was a diplomat and an expert on Casanova. This was Second Lieutenant James Rives Childs.

(U) While attending the Army War College in 1917, Lt. Childs answered a call for four officers to become "cipher experts." With a few lectures on cryptology by Captains Herbert O. Yardley and John M. Manly, plus two weeks at the Riverbank Laboratory studying under William and Elizebeth Friedman, Childs left for France to join the AEF. This was a return to wartime Europe: Childs had been a driver in the ambulance corps two years before.

(U) When he arrived, to his surprise, Childs was named head of the German Cipher Section. He found out later that it was a case of mistaken identity -- there was another man named Childs who was noted as an amateur cryptographer.

(U) However, Childs had natural cryptanalytic ability. He recovered the key words to a German cipher and demonstrated the weaknesses in an American code. He was also on liaison duty with French cryptanalysts when the Germans adopted an important new cipher, and learned by working with the allied bureau.

(U) Childs brought to cryptanalysis a background of scholarly activity. He obtained a B.A. from Randolph-Macon College in 1912 and an M.A. from Harvard in 1915 -- specializing in Shakespeare. In 1915, in order to get to France, even before the United States entered the war, he volunteered for the ambulance corps. At the time of his commission in the U.S. Army, he was a newspaper reporter.

(U) After the Armistice that ended the fighting, Childs spent a few months working at the Paris Peace Conference with Herbert Yardley. However, he declined an offer to remain in cryptology and went on to other duties. Eventually, he joined the consular service, and late in his public career he served as ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1949-50) and as ambassador to Ethiopia in 1950.

(U) In retirement, he went into a second career in belle lettres, writing books on Shakespeare and Casanova, among others.

(U) J. Rives Childs passed away in 1987.

[(U//FOUO) retired NSA cryptanalyst and editor]

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