



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

March 1, 2021

Ms. Luz D. Ortiz
Department of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 02F09-02
Alexandria, VA 22350-3100
luz.d.ortiz.civ@mail.mil

Dear Ms. Ortiz:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been notified of a potential unauthorized disposition of records at the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). A member of the public alleges that in response to a FOIA request on or about April 1, 2014, WRNMMC altered and unlawfully destroyed FY 2013 FOIA processing logs and related communication records.

NARA requests that the DHA investigate this matter to determine if all applicable FOIA records were provided at the time of the request and whether responsive records were/or will be destroyed in accordance with the appropriate records disposition schedules. In addition, please verify whether the provided responsive records were altered, aside from normal FOIA procedures.

NARA also requests that you provide NARA with a response within 30 days in accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16. Your report should include a description of the records; the records schedule disposition citation that covers the files; details regarding the records destruction incident and recovery efforts; and a statement of the safeguards that have been or will be implemented to prevent future unauthorized disposals of such records. If you have any questions, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence R. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a distinct 'R'.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government



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January 26, 2022

Ms. Luz D. Ortiz
Department of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 02F09-02
Alexandria, VA 22350-3100
luz.d.ortiz.civ@mail.mil

Dear Ms. Ortiz:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been notified of a recent court decision for the case, *Hammond v. Department of Defense, Et Al.*, No. 1:16-cv-00421, in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. This case addresses FOIA requests that were also the subject of an allegation of an unauthorized disposition of records at the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) (UD-2021-0020). A member of the public alleged that in response to a FOIA request on or about April 1, 2014, WRNMMC altered and unlawfully destroyed FY 2013 FOIA processing logs and related communication records.

DHA determined that the applicable FOIA responsive records were provided to the requester and an unauthorized disposition did not occur. The court also found that WRNMMC provided the requested records and conducted "reasonable and adequate" searches in response to the requester's multiple FOIA requests. Based on this information, NARA considers this allegation of unauthorized disposition unfounded. If you have any questions, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government