

9 OSWALD'S SECURITY CLEARANCE

Synopsis: Official records in the 26 volumes do not contradict the claims of Oswald's Marine Corps associates that he had 'Secret' (or higher) clearance.

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The Warren Report notes that Oswald received a 'Confidential' clearance in 1957 (WR 682). As far as I know, the Report does not ever claim that he never received a higher clearance. That is implied, but not explicitly stated, in the following carefully phrased passage:

"Some of his associates believed rumors, incorrect according to official records, that he had lost his clearance to work on radar crews; one recalled hearing that Oswald had once had clearance above the 'confidential' level and had lost it because he 'had poured' beer over a staff NCO's head in an enlisted club in Japan, and had been put in the brig'." (WR 685)

One of the "official records" cited here should be analysed carefully. It is a report by the Director of Personnel, Headquarters, USMC, apparently submitted in response to questions from the Commission; the emphasis has been added:

"...Because of his grade and lack of experience, he would not normally have had access to classified matter in the performance of his duties as an Aviation Electronics Operator following completion of his training heretofore described. There is no evidence contained in the personnel file that OSWALD's security clearance was ever terminated, nor is there evidence that he was granted access to any information of higher than confidential characterization. It was, however, the practice of the Marine Corps, that on occasions where assignments, similar to OSWALD's, required a higher clearance than confidential in order to perform specific, classified electronic duties, personnel with clearances commensurate with the duties to be performed were assigned thereto." (CE 1961, p. 3)

I do not know whether the personnel file (Folsom DE 1) would be expected to have a full record of Oswald's clearances. (It is noted that when Oswald went to Russia a check of records at USMC headquarters did not turn up his 'Confidential' clearance (CE 918).) I do not know whether the question of Oswald's clearance was directed to any officials in the USMC in addition to the Director of Personnel.

Taken alone, the last sentence quoted above may be interpreted (and may have been meant to be interpreted) as follows: if Oswald had encountered a task which required 'Secret' clearance, the assignment would have been transferred to someone else. Because of the context, and because of the use of "however," I think that the quoted passage should be read as follows: "Ordinarily, a low-ranking Aviation Electronics Operator would not deal with classified material. The personnel file does not indicate that Oswald had 'secret' clearance; however, assignments like Oswald's which required 'secret' clearance were generally performed by men with that clearance." In other words, "Oswald had assignments similar to ones which required 'secret' clearance. If he was in fact doing 'secret' work he presumably had 'secret' clearance, although that is not indicated in his personnel file."

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