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(U) Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

(U) A Language Scholar from Illinois

(U) Latin, French, German, Russian, Greek, Sanskrit, Navajo, Indo-European. NSA'ers are a clever group with a wide variety of learned hobbies, including language study. One lover of learning, Marie Meyer, who studied all the languages listed above, was a talented Russian linguist at NSA and its predecessor agencies and was the first person to receive NSA's Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

(U) Marie Anne Meyer was born on April 7, 1897. Originally from Bloomington, Illinois, she attended Illinois State Normal University (in Normal, Illinois) from which she received her bachelor's degree in education in 1919. She began teaching school shortly thereafter, but continued her education during summer sessions at the University of Chicago, specializing in French and Latin. She received her master's degree in Latin in August 1930. Throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, she took additional classes during the summer months in a variety of languages, including Sanskrit, Greek, and German.

(U) Meyer came to the Army's World War II cryptologic organization, the Signals Intelligence Service, in October 1943, likely as a German linguist. Following the war, Meyer moved to the VENONA problem, the effort to exploit a family of encrypted Soviet communications, which turned out to discuss espionage as well as diplomatic matters. (As a side note, University of Chicago records show that Meyer took a Russian class by correspondence during the summer of 1946.) Joining the problem in 1946, she was only the second linguist assigned to exploit the KGB codes and, together with Alice Joys, is credited by the great Russian linguist Meredith Gardner with making the first code group recoveries on that system.

(U) Meyer stayed in the cryptologic business, through the Armed Forces Security Agency and then the formation NSA. She spent the remainder of her career on some facet of the Russian problem and taught several Russian language classes at the NSA training school. A 1950 NSA memorandum describes her as a highly professional Russian linguist holding the highest level of competency.

(U) When she retired in 1960, soft-spoken Marie Meyer, remembered as "the perfect lady," was the first person to receive NSA's Meritorious Civilian Service Award. According to the NSA Newsletter, it was presented to her by NSA director Lieutenant General Samford for her "successful achievements in difficult and complex fields of NSA operations, … unique qualification for pioneering and developing special instructional courses and

programs, … positive, dynamic approach in resolving unusual technical problems, and … exceptional ability in working relationships."

(U) In retirement, Meyer "engaged in special research at Catholic University involving Celtic languages." Some passions never die.

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