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(U) Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

(U) Ann Z. Caracristi

(U) Ann Z. Caracristi came to Washington less than a week after graduating from Russell Sage College in Troy, New York, anxious "to do something for the war effort." That something was to work as a cryptanalyst with the Army Signal Security Agency. Except for a brief stint in publishing immediately after World War II, this wartime job grew into a stellar career spanning almost forty years.

(U) Caracristi was born in 1921 in Bronxville, New York. She graduated from college in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in English and history. She was hired by the Army's cryptologic organization that June as an assistant cryptologic specialist. Her initial assignment was sorting raw traffic for the team studying Japanese Army enciphered messages. However, she quickly advanced to cryptanalysis and supervision of other cryptanalysts.

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(b)(3)-18 USC 798
(b)(3)-50 USC 3024(i)
(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

~~(S//SI)~~ Although she left cryptologic service in 1945 at the end of World War II, Caracristi returned in 1946 as part of the Army's effort to reassemble its wartime talent. Her assignments, at what eventually became part of NSA, were in the production organization responsible for the Soviet Union [redacted] an organization with the highest visibility to policy makers in the executive branch and intelligence community of any office at NSA. Caracristi excelled in [redacted] and demonstrated a flair for training junior analysts. An early advocate of automated techniques to replace traditional [redacted] for a major project; the result was increased production with considerable savings in time and manpower.

~~(TS//SI)~~ In 1956 Caracristi became chief of the [redacted] From 1959 to 1980 she was chief of major research and operations elements culminating with a position as head of [redacted] In 1980 she became the first woman deputy director of NSA.

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(U) Under her leadership, A Group enjoyed numerous technical breakthroughs and became noted for its dedication to the needs of intelligence consumers, areas Caracristi emphasized. She was a pioneer in the application of early computers and mechanized processing to cryptanalysis. She established a new laboratory facility for studying new

communications phenomena. She also created the organizational infrastructure to train and make effective use of one of the largest group of new employees ever absorbed by NSA.

(U) Besides her organizational duties, Caracristi served on a wide range of special boards and committees which helped to shape national cryptologic policies and intelligence community relationships. She also was a member of director-level promotion boards and helped design NSA's career development program. Caracristi was a member of the Cryptanalysis Career Panel, which established standards for this highly technical discipline.

(U) Her expertise, knowledge, professionalism, and tough response to the challenge of tough intelligence problems brought her rapid advancement at NSA; often, at each stage, Caracristi was one of the first women to attain a particular senior grade. In 1959 she was promoted into the ranks of the "supergrades," the equivalent of today's senior executive service -- one of a handful of women in the entire U.S. government to achieve that level. In 1975 she became the first woman at NSA to be promoted to GS-18.

(U) Caracristi received numerous awards for her outstanding contributions to the cryptologic business. During her career at NSA, her honors included the Federal Woman's Award (1965), the Meritorious Civilian Service Award (1966), the Exceptional Civilian Service Award (1975), and the National Service League Award (1979). She also received the Department of Defense Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 1980, the DOD's highest civilian honor. Since her retirement, she has been awarded the National Security Medal (1982) and the William Oliver Baker Award (1999).

(U) Ann Caracristi's retirement in 1982 meant only that she changed the focus and broadened the scope of her activities. She was a member of the NSA Scientific Advisory Board (NSASAB), composed of the most senior retired officials and distinguished consultants. Her NSASAB assignments included responsibility for cryptanalysis/cryptomathematics, military operations, and telecommunications. For almost a decade, 1982-1991, she served on the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel. Caracristi was appointed to President Clinton's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in September 1993; as chairperson of the Middle East Task Force, she led a comprehensive review of U.S. intelligence activities in that region and submitted specific recommendations to the president. Most recently, she was a member of the DCI/Secretary of Defense Joint Security Commission. She was president of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO).

(U) She remains a very active member of the Board of Directors of the National Cryptologic Museum Foundation.

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