UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

Rear Admiral Earl Everett Stone: A Convert to Cryptologic Centralization

(U) Rear Admiral Earl Everett Stone, USN, was the first director of the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), the immediate predecessor organization of the National Security Agency (NSA). An ardent opponent of the unification concept, Stone found himself charged with making AFSA a reality. He attacked the problem with the zeal of a convert. Stone cajoled the services into cooperation by using the same arguments that he had ignored in 1948. Although Stone was not a career cryptologist, he holds a significant place in cryptologic history.

(U) Earl Everett Stone was born on 2 December 1895, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Beginning in 1914, Stone attended the U. S. Naval Academy. He graduated and was commissioned an ensign on 29 June 1917. Stone was a man of academic talent. By June 1925, he had attended the Navy Postgraduate School, completed a Master of Science degree in communications engineering at Harvard University, and spent four months at the Naval Research Laboratory for additional instruction.

(U) In typical navy tradition, Stone spent time at sea throughout his career. Stone's leadership skills were evident because he commanded several ships during the 1930s and 40s. These include the USS Long, the USS Aylwin and the USS Wisconsin. Stone was the executive officer on the USS California, a battleship sunk by the Japanese during the attack on Pearl Harbor. By 8 January 1946, Stone had advanced to the rank of rear admiral.

(U) Stone's primary focus during his military career was naval communications. This began two years after graduating from the Naval Academy; from March 1919 until June 1923, he gained experience as aide and radio officer on the staff of Commander Base Force, Pacific Fleet. From 1928 to 1930 and again from 1933 to 1935, Stone served in the Navy Department's Office of Naval Communications in Washington, D.C. In June 1938, he returned to Washington for a three-year tour in the Navy Department as communications war plans officer. Stone advanced to the position of director of naval communications and held this office from 1946 to 1949.

(U) Stone is best remembered for his leadership of the Stone Board and for his most challenging job, the first director of AFSA. Stone was the chairman of a Department of

Approved for Release by NSA on 06-12-2009, FOIA Case # 52567

Defense committee, appointed in August of 1948 to make recommendations for reforming and reorganizing cryptologic activities. The Army supported consolidation, but the Navy and Air Force opposed unification. In December 1948, the Stone Board, named after its chairman, issued a report that recommended maintaining the status quo. A few months later, with the advent of a new secretary of defense and a change of position by the Air Force, the Navy grudgingly went along with the unification concept. AFSA was created on 20 May 1949.

(U) Just six months before, he had opposed the very concept of centralization and submitted a report to the secretary of defense opposing the AFSA concept. Now he was the chief. Stone directed AFSA from 15 July 1949 to 15 July 1951. As the first AFSA director, Stone presided over the initial and stormy U.S. government attempts to centralize this country's cryptologic efforts.

(U) The impact of AFSA on the services was immediate and severe. Besides turning over more than 600,000 square feet of space to the new organization, the Army and Navy had to donate about 80 percent of their existing Washington-area billets -- 79 percent for the Army Security Agency and 86 percent for Naval Security Group. Although the Army Security Agency kept many of its uniformed service people, its corps of over 2,500 civilian experts was turned over to AFSA virtually intact. This made the Service Cryptologic Agencies little more than collection organizations, with practically no central processing -- all arms and legs, but no body. This revolution was accomplished virtually overnight with only minimal dissension and was AFSA's most noteworthy success.

(U) In these early years of sparring with the various military cryptologic organizations, Stone's consolidation efforts met with only limited success. The structural weaknesses within AFSA itself reduced the effectiveness of Stone's efforts. Stone did not have the authority to suppress conflicts and duplications. AFSA was a military organization that reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He spent most of his time negotiating with the services over what AFSA could do because he could not direct the services. This military organization slighted the intelligence needs of civilian organizations such as the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of State. Poor performance during the Korean War made further reform urgent.

(U) Many of the structural weaknesses in AFSA were corrected by the creation of NSA in 1952. Stone's contribution was that he laid the groundwork for successful centralization in the early years of NSA's existence.

(U) After this brief foray into cryptology, Stone continued to hold positions of responsibility in the Navy. He was director of communications at the European Command Headquarters from 1952 to 1953. From 1953 to 1955, Stone served as commander, Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet. His last tour of active service, 1955 to 1958, was as

superintendent of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. After 44 years of service, Stone retired in 1958.

(U) Stone was awarded the World War I Victory Medal with Escort Clasp; the American Defense Service Medal with Fleet Clasp; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with Silver Star; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon; the Navy Unit Commendation (WWII); and the Legion of Merit award (Assistant Chief of Staff for Communications, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, 1945). Additionally, he was awarded a gold star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit (Assistant Director of Naval Communications, 1942 to 1944); and a second gold star, with Combat V, in lieu of a third Legion of Merit (Korea, 1951 to 1952). Admiral Stone died on 24 September 1989.

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

[(U//~~FOUO~~) Sharon Maneki / [redacted] Center for Cryptologic History, 972-2893(s), samanek@nsa]

Horizontal Line

Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

Content Owner: Feedback

Web POC: Feedback

Last Modified: by nsr
Last Reviewed: February 28, 2003
Next Review: 365 days