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(U) Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

(U) Major General John B. Ackerman, USAF

(U) The Truman Memorandum of 24 October 1952 restructured the COMINT world and created the National Security Agency (NSA). Major General Canine, the director of the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), was named director of NSA and was promoted to lieutenant general. There was, however, no appointment of a civilian deputy as had been mandated by the Brownell Commission. It is probable that Canine, who was old-line military, simply did not want a civilian deputy. He did not, however, want to fly in the face of the Brownell Committee mandate. "Vice-director" was perfectly good military terminology and had been used in AFSA. As a result, NSA started off with two vice-directors: Admiral Joseph N. Wenger, who had been vice-director of AFSA, and his successor at NSA, Brigadier General John B. Ackerman, USAF.

(U) John Ackerman was born in Auburn, NY, in 1909. He attended high school in Watertown, NY, and college in Watertown and Marion, Alabama. He entered West Point in 1928 and graduated in 1932.

(U) His first assignment was a brief period with an antiaircraft battery in California before starting flight school at Randolph Field, TX, from which he graduated in June 1935. He spent three years as a squadron officer at Maxwell Field, AL, and then entered California Institute of Technology, where he was awarded a Master of Science degree in aviation meteorology.

(U) The degree in meteorology led to several assignments. From 1939 to 1940 he was the station weather officer and assistant operations officer at Chanute Field, IL. Major Ackerman went on from there to participate in the organization, training, and manning of the Air Corps Weather Service, and then, as a colonel, he organized the 58th Bombardment Wing weather service in 1943.

(U) When assigned to the China-Burma-India theater, he served on General Stratemeyer's staff and on the combined Air Command Staff for a year. He then spent a year as the assistant chief of staff, Plans, for the Continental Air Command, which was tasked with moving aircraft from the European Theater of Operations to the Pacific Theater of Operations. He was then appointed assistant air attaché in London, where later, as air attaché, he received his first star.

(U) Upon returning to the United States, he served as the deputy director of intelligence for

the Air Force. As such, he sat as USAF member of the Ad Hoc Committee on U.S. Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB) Procedures. This was the committee that selected Major General Ralph Canine to succeed Admiral Earl Stone as the director of the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA).

(U) In 1953 Ackerman came to the assignment of vice-director, National Security Agency, from a career in Air Force operations, with very little background in intelligence. As vice-director, his duties involved broad responsibility for Agency operations and for establishing and monitoring NSA policies for recruiting, training and assigning civilian and military personnel. He also represented the Agency on intelligence and Department of Defense boards and committees. He was promoted to major general while with NSA, and during the last year of his three-year tour he served concurrently as Canine's chief of staff. While Ackerman was vice-director/chief of staff, Lieutenant General John A. Samford, USAF, was nominated to replace Canine as DIRNSA. This would have resulted in the top two jobs at NSA being held by Air Force officers. As a result, National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) 6 was promulgated, mandating that a civilian would hold the office of deputy director, NSA. This resulted in the appointment of Joseph Ream as DDIR.

(U) Major General Ackerman went on to command the Thirteenth Air Force, stationed in the Philippines. When he returned to the U.S. in 1958, he was appointed deputy commander, Air Force Security Service, from which post he retired in 1960. He died on 13 June 1981.

[(U//~~FOUO)~~David P. Mowry, Center for Cryptologic History, 972-2893s, dpmowry]

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