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ESS1364: (U) Center for Cryptologic History
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 From: "Carleen, Barry D (CIV-NSA) EC" <bdcarle@ [redacted] > (b) (3) - P.L. 86-36
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(U) CRYPTOLOGIC ALMANAC: 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERIES

(U) Major General John E. Morrison: A SIGINT Innovator

(U) Most of today's NSA employees probably think that the National Security Operations Center (NSOC) has always been here. Seems so, doesn't it? But it hasn't. NSOC, known originally as the National SIGINT Operations Center, didn't exist until 1972. Its creation was due largely to the visionary efforts of Major General John E. Morrison.

(U) General Morrison's most important contribution to the SIGINT community may have been the creation of the NSOC. After the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the Pueblo capture in 1968, General Morrison proposed to Lieutenant General Marshall Carter, the DIRNSA at that time, that the Agency establish a single, national SIGINT watch center to respond to similar crises. When the North Koreans shot down a Navy EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft in April 1969, General Morrison, as the assistant director for production (ADP), found it nearly impossible to produce a timely, coordinated NSA response to the event. The two NSA organizations responsible couldn't cooperate, requiring more than six hours to issue a joint follow-up to the original Critic. NSA's liaison officer in the White House Situation Room finally had to drive out to NSA to get the materials he required to brief the president.

(U) Although DIRNSA concurred with the need and charged General Morrison with establishing the 24-hour watch center in July 1969, it took three more years for him to overcome the many objections, real and imagined, to create such a center. All of the problems inherent in the establishment of a large organization surfaced: space, staffing, billets, and communications networks, among others. As you would expect, every group chief in NSA had his own ideas as to the form and function of the new center. Nevertheless, General Morrison successfully guided the plan through all of the obstacles and published NSOC's formal charter in 1972.

(U) while this was unquestionably a monumental achievement and forever changed the way NSA would respond to any future crisis, John Morrison was anything but a "one-hit wonder." His career spanned 41 years, 32 of those in the military. General Morrison was instrumental in transforming Air Force cryptology into a powerful support force for the signal intelligence community.

(U) John Morrison was born [redacted] after high school at [redacted] attending [redacted] at night. He launched his military career in February of 1941 as a private in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, 21st Signal Operations Company, at Fort Meade. After participating in [redacted] (b) (6)

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Army maneuvers in Louisiana, Texas, and North Carolina, and after developing a decided distaste for "washing [his] mess gear in cold water," he soon applied for Officer Candidate School (OCS) and was commissioned in the Signal Corps in February 1942. His first assignment was to the Army's Signal Intelligence Service in the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue in Washington.

(U) Here, we'll insert one of those "small world, isn't it?" anecdotes. Just a year after graduating from OCS, he transferred from the Signal Corps to the Army Air Force in the Pacific theater. His commanding officer at Hickam AFB was Colonel Gordon Blake, later Lieutenant General Blake, director of NSA. Their paths would cross again. General Morrison remained in the Pacific for more than 35 months.

(U) At the end of world war II, General Morrison was assigned to Headquarters, Army Air Force, where he served as the assistant to the Air Force member of the U.S. Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB). While in this position, he played a key role in the transfer of the Radio Squadrons Mobile from the Army to the Air Force. This made him one of the architects of the Air Force Security Service (AFSS) (now transformed into the Air Intelligence Agency). The same year he attended the second British-U.S. (BRUSA) (COMINT) Conference in London along with several U.S. notables, including Louis Tordella. He then worked with the (Admiral Earl) Stone Committee, whose recommendations led to the establishment of the Armed Forces Security Service (AFSA) in 1949. AFSA, of course, was the forerunner of NSA.

(U) General Morrison's career was full and certainly varied following these initial assignments. A menu of his positions from 1949 to 1960 included commander of the 3rd Radio Squadron Mobile in Alaska; faculty member of the Air Command and Staff School; assistant deputy chief of staff, Operations, USAFSS; commander, Air Force Special Communications Center; Air Force coordinator for the Military Communications Electronics Board (JCS).

(U) While chief, Policy and Objectives Division of the Directorate of Telecommunications in 1960, General Morrison played a prominent role in the establishment of the Air Force Communications Service. In 1961, as the assistant director of the Defense Communication Agency (DCA) for Plans and Programs, he directed the conceptualization and implementation of the Department of Defense Automatic Voice Network (AUTOVON) and Automatic Digital Network (AUTODIN) systems.

(U) Lieutenant General Gordon Blake, then DIRNSA, designated General Morrison as chief, NSA Pacific (NSAPAC) in July 1963. When Morrison returned to NSA three years later, he became deputy assistant director for production (ADP), and then ADP, a position he held for five more years, serving Vice Admiral Noel Gayler and Lieutenant General Sam Phillips.

(U) Shortly after leaving active military duty in 1973, General Morrison was appointed chairman of the SIGINT Committee by the DCI, then Dr. James Schlesinger. In addition, he was named as the director, SIGINT Tasking Office of the Intelligence Community Staff, serving under four DCIs, and, concurrently, as the chief of D5, Intelligence Community Affairs, NSA, under three DIRNSAs.

(U) General Morrison finally retired from government service in 1979, but continued serving the Agency and the intelligence community. He was a member of the Military Operations Panel of the NSA Advisory Board (NSAAB) from 1970 to 1982, and then a member of the Space System Panel, NSAAB. Today he is president of the National Cryptologic Museum Foundation.

(U) General Morrison received the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal in July 1979. His military decorations include the

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Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster. He was also inducted into the NSA Hall of Honor in 2001.

[Jimmie Collins, Center for Cryptologic History, 972-2893s, jacoll2@nsa]

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