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Lieutenant General Ralph J. Canine, USA

1951 - 1952 AFSA

1952 - 1956 NSA

Lieutenant General Ralph J. Canine was born in 1895 in Flora, Indiana, and graduated from Northwestern University in 1916 in premed studies. He entered World War I as an Army second lieutenant. He knew immediately that the Army would be his life, and never had a second thought about a medical career. He served in various combat posts in France, and elected to stay in the Army after the armistice was signed in 1918. The interwar period (1919-1941) was his education, when he traveled from one Army post to another, filling a variety of positions. When World War II broke out, Canine was well fitted for responsibility. He became the chief of staff for the XII Corps, which served in George Patton's Third Army during its historic race across France in 1944. After the war he was rewarded with command of the First Infantry Division, one of the most prestigious of Army jobs.

In 1951 Canine became director of the Army Forces Security Agency, which was America's first tentative step toward cryptologic unification. He was there long enough (one year) to see what the organization lacked. When President Truman created NSA in 1952, Lieutenant General Canine continued as its first director.

Lieutenant General Canine is known today as the Great Unifier -- the man who, almost single-handedly, forced cryptologic unification on the Services. His term at NSA, from 1952 to 1956, became the crucible for cryptologic centralization. He departed the Army and NSA a figure of mythic stature.

The bluff, no-nonsense Army general was just what the new organization needed. He ruthlessly squashed dissent among the Services, forcing them into a centralized system. But if he appeared autocratic to his opponents, to the NSA workforce he was a hero. He increased hiring, created an

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elevated civilian grade structure with better promotion opportunities, sent NSAers to senior service schools, initiated the college tuition payment program, worked for congressional passage of new hiring and security authorities, and forged ahead with the plan to move NSA out of borrowed quarters at Arlington Hall and Naval Security Station, and into its own new building at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Lieutenant General Canine never occupied the Director's office at Fort Meade, but everyone knew who was responsible for it, and when a new building (Headquarters Building) was opened in 1963, he did the dedication.

Lieutenant General Canine died on 8 March 1969 at Walter Reed Army Hospital, at age 73.

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