

UNCLASSIFIED



## **Vice Admiral Noel Gayler, USN**

**1969 - 1972**

Vice Admiral Noel Gayler was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1914. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1935. After five years of Fleet service in battleships and destroyers, he won his Naval Aviator's wings at Pensacola, Florida, in 1940.

Before and during World War II, he served as a carrier-based fighter pilot in Fighting Squadrons Two, Three, and Twelve, which at various times operated from the aircraft carriers USS *Enterprise*, USS *Lexington*, USS *Saratoga*, and USS *Randolph*. He also served as the fighter test pilot in the Flight Test Division of the Naval Air Test Center. He finished the war as Air operations officer on the staff of the commander, Second Carrier Task Force, during the knockout strikes against Japan.

Vice Admiral Gayler served variously as deputy director, Special Devices Center; Head, Fighter Design Branch, Bureau of Aeronautics; with the Weapons System Evaluation Group of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; as commander, Air Development Squadron Three; in the Air Warfare Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations; and as Pacific Fleet operations officer. He was the third U.S. naval officer ever to fly jet aircraft.

He also served as the naval aide to the secretary of the navy, Thomas S. Gates, Jr., and as commanding officer of the attack aircraft carrier USS *Ranger*.

Vice Admiral Gayler was selected to flag rank in 1960 and reported to the U.S. ambassador, London, for duty as U.S. naval attaché in August of that year. In 1962 and 1963 he commanded Carrier Division Twenty in the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, then served as director, Development Programs, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. On 20 March 1965 he became assistant chief of naval operations (development). In September 1967 he assumed duty as deputy director of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff with headquarters at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

He became Director of the National Security Agency on 1 August 1969. As opposed to his predecessors, Vice Admiral Gayler was not an officer with extensive intelligence background who was at the end of his career. Rather, he had an operations background, and expectations of further assignments. One of his first moves, in an attempt to restore the relationship between NSA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to one of full cooperation, was to appoint a permanent NSA representative to the Pentagon, accredited to the JCS the military departments, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He also moved rapidly to oversee a significant, sorely needed upgrade of NSA's internal and external communications systems. During his tenure, the Agency undertook the cryptologic portion of President Nixon's "Vietnamization" effort. Vice Admiral Gayler played a key role in strengthening NSA's moves to begin exploiting the then new technology of communications satellites.

When his tour as Director of NSA ended in 1972, he became the first NSA Director to receive his fourth star. He was assigned to one of the choicest Navy commands, commander in chief, Pacific.

Following his retirement from the Navy in 1976, Admiral Gayler became a fervent advocate of total nuclear disarmament.

UNCLASSIFIED