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(U)Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

(U)Dr. William D. Wray

(U) Have you ever passed the sign for Wray Road near Gatehouse 2 and wondered who Wray was? Surprisingly, I never did. That is, until one day, when a former Agency senior told me a story about her mentor, Dr. William Dean Wray. Almost tearfully, she recalled how once, when there was pressure to remove her from a high-ranking Agency position for political reasons, Dr. Wray convinced the director to let her to keep her job. (Needless to say, her work proved Dr. Wray's faith in her abilities.) Later, another former senior told me that sometimes, when his division faced a particularly difficult technical problem, they would forward it to Dr. Wray, by then an Agency senior, for a second opinion. By now I was quite curious about this brilliant, caring man after whom Wray Road is named.

(U) Dr. Wray was born in Ithaca, New York, on 1 September 1910. He received his A.B. degree from Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, in 1932 and his M.A. from Cornell University. He was employed as a mathematics teacher at Cascadilla School, a private prep school, while he worked on his Ph.D. After receiving his Ph.D. in applied statistics from Cornell in 1940, he joined the faculty of Williams College in Williamstown, Pennsylvania.

(U) Dr. Wray was ineligible to join any branch of the military during World War II. However, in 1941 he began a Navy correspondence course in cryptanalysis, which led to his employment by the Navy the following year. He was probably assigned to mathematical research instead of operational cryptanalysis. Dr. Wray was one of the few civilians in his section, and friends recalled later that attitudes toward the civilians in that workplace were not pleasant. However, "[p]atriotic conviction kept him with the Navy. His refusal to be discouraged proved itself on many occasions and commended him to everyone. He came to be a confidant and advisor to many." (1)

(S//SI) After the war, he became one of the only civilian chiefs of a Navy operational organization: NY-4, the Romance Language Section. With the creation of AFSA and subsequently NSA, Dr. Wray continued holding positions of increasing responsibility. He was chief of a variety of high-level organizations including the Office of Asiatic Communist Countries, the Special Techniques Group, and the key component in the Production organization responsible for analysis against all non-Soviet targets. In the late 1950s he served as chairman of the committee charged with planning the location and

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operation of a triservice processing center for COMINT activities in the Pacific. This resulted in the creation in 1961 of the [REDACTED] He was also a member of the high-level NSA management review board organized by NSA director Admiral Frost and commonly known as the Rowlett Board after its chairman, Frank Rowlett. The board's findings, handed down in July 1961, significantly affected the organization and business of NSA for years to come.

(U) Dr. Wray died on 12 November 1962 after a long illness. He is remembered during his years at NSA as a kind mentor and a technical expert whose insights into problems were frequently sought. Dr. Wray was awarded the NSA Exceptional Civilian Service Award posthumously on 27 May 1963. The certificate accompanying the award praised his "outstanding organizational and technical ability, inspiring leadership, unwavering devotion to duty, and exceptionally comprehensive knowledge of areas of responsibility" over his twenty years of service to his country.

(U) Notes

(1) *Cryptolog*, October 1979, 15.

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