

RETIREMENT REQUESTED BY MARK RHOADS

Word has been received that Mr. Mark Rhoads, well-known for many years in the cryptologic field, is requesting retirement from civil service for reasons of health. Mr. Rhoads' many friends will receive with regret this news and will recall with pleasure his long association with the Army Security Agency and its predecessors.

Mr. Rhoads' association with the signal intelligence service began in the early thirties, when, as a First Lieutenant in the Regular Army, he was the first student officer to be assigned to the newly authorized Signal Intelligence School established in Washington under the direction of the Chief Signal Officer. From the time of his assignment to the school, Mr. Rhoads continued, with the exception of seven years of enforced retirement, to be associated as officer and civilian with the field of cryptology, sharing in the Army's development of its signal intelligence activities, witnessing the growth of the present far-flung organization, and contributing to its achievements.

Immediately preceding his recent illness, a recurrence of the pulmonary affliction which had previously interrupted his Army career, Mr. Rhoads was Assistant to the Chief of the Training Division, Armed Forces Security Agency. He now plans to make his home at Arvada, Colorado.

ACADEMY GRADUATE AND U. S. ARMY OFFICER

Mr. Rhoads was born in Edge Hill, Pennsylvania on September 9, 1897. In 1916, after graduating from Cheltenham High School, Elkins Park, Pa., he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point as cadet. In 1918 he graduated from the Academy with degree of B.S. and was commissioned in the

Regular Army as Second Lieutenant of Cavalry.

As an officer in the U. S. Army, Lt. Rhoads later graduated (1923) from the U. S. Army Signal School's Communications Officers' Class at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey; and from 1923 to 1924 attended a post-graduate course in communications engineering at Yale University.

Following these courses Lt. Rhoads served as signal officer with the 2d Cavalry from 1924 to 1925; from 1925 to 1927 as Signal Officer at Fort Bliss, Texas; following his transfer to the Signal Corps in 1927, he served from 1928 to 1931 as the Regular Army signal instructor in Indiana and Kentucky. In 1931 he was assigned as the first student officer to take the special course in cryptography and cryptanalysis which had been initiated in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Washington, D. C., that year under the direction of Mr. William F. Friedman, then Chief of the Signal Intelligence Service. This course, which was designed to provide the Army with a reserve of officers trained in signal intelligence operations was to prove its value many times over in the later difficult war years. Among its distinguished early graduates may be mentioned the second student officer to be assigned to the course, First Lieutenant W. Preston Corderman, later Brigadier General and Chief, Army Security Agency, from 1942 to 1946.

Following his period of training in the school, Lt. Rhoads was placed in command of the Provisional Radio Intelligence Detachment, 51st Signal Battalion, at Fort Monmouth. In 1935, under the command of Lt. Rhoads, this Detachment was sent to the Philippines, where it was to set up an intercept station at Fort Hughes on Caballo Island. Unfortunately the work of the Detachment was seriously hampered by the transfer of highly-skilled operators to other organizations partly because of the local need for qualified radio operators, and also possibly because of the failure to appreciate the mission of the Detachment.

Also, the contraction

by Captain Rhoads of pulmonary tuberculosis three months after his arrival in the Philippines brought the work of the Detachment to an untimely end. Captain Rhoads was returned to the United States and hospitalized in Fitzsimmons General Hospital in Denver, where, after an illness of two years, he was retired from active military service in March 1937 for physical disability.

LATER SERVED AS CIVILIAN

active military

Soon after Pearl Harbor Mr. Rhoads attempted to return to ^{active military} duty as ~~an~~ ~~officer~~ but was repeatedly rejected by the Army medical authorities because of his past illness. Undaunted by these refusals, Mr. Rhoads secured a civil service appointment with the Signal Security Agency, and at considerable personal sacrifice came to Washington in 1943 as Assistant to his former teacher and friend of long-standing, Mr. William F. Friedman, who was then Director of Communications Research, in the Signal Security Agency. Mr. Rhoads' war-time service was marked by a combination of honesty and kindness, of self-effacement and devotion to duty, ~~which were equalled by few and excelled by none.~~ On 3 May 1946 Mr. Rhoads was presented by Brig. General P. E. Peabody with the Commendation for Exceptional Civilian Service "for patriotic devotion above and beyond the call of duty, for exceptionally meritorious service to his country in time of war; for superior intelligence and initiative, extraordinary diligence and ability in executing many varied and difficult assignments as Assistant Director of Communications Research from January 1944 to January 1946."

With the establishment of the Armed Forces Security Agency in July 1949, Mr. Rhoads joined that organization as Assistant to the Chief, Technical Division, a position which he held first under Mr. Friedman and then under Captain Thomas H. Dyer, U. S. Navy, until the time of his retirement. There is little doubt

that continuous attention to duty and long hours of concentrated effort contributed to breaking down the physical resistance which had been built up against a recurrence of his earlier illness. In June 1951, upon undergoing his regular annual physical examination at Fitzsimmons Hospital, it was discovered, to the regret of all who learned of the findings, that the illness of 1935 had returned and that Mr. Rhoads required hospitalization once more. Upon recovery in December 1951, the Army medical authorities recommended that Mr. Rhoads not return to any active duty whatever, in the hope that the resistance built up once more by long rest not be undermined again by a return to work except of the lightest sort. Realizing that he owed it to his wife and family to remain in good health for many years, and that he could not allow himself to "take it easy" so long as he occupied any official position, Mr. Rhoads wisely elected to retire.

Those who know him well -- and there are many who may call him friend --
^{have} found in Mr. Rhoads a man whose nature is marked by rare understanding, sympathy, and good judgement. In addition to his own faithful service to his country as officer and civilian, Mr. Rhoads may look with pride upon his two sons, Captain Edwin Milton Rhoads, graduate of the U.S. Military Academy in 1943, and Lt. Mark Charles Rhoads, Academy graduate of 1950, and upon his daughters, one of whom, Esther Marcetta Rhoads Lutz, will be remembered by her former associates in the Signal Security Agency where she was also employed during the Second World War. ~~Many of the associates of Mr. Rhoads~~ Mr. Rhoads' wife, Esther Wolcott Buckman Rhoads, who has shared his career with quiet strength and sustaining courage, will be particularly missed by her many friends in the circle of officers' wives and in the numerous civic activities in which she

took an active part.

We shall miss both Mr. and Mrs. Rhoads, but wish them many years of well-earned rest and relaxation in their future home in Arvada, Colorado, where they ~~have~~ ^{have} already many friends and an active civic life.