

1992 Engineer of Distinction



Thurman D. Rodgers

B.S. Electrical Engineering, TPI, 1957
Public Administration, University of Northern Colorado

Lt. General U.S. Army (Retired)

Last assignment:

Director, Defense Information Systems Agency

Manager, National Communications System

Washington, DC

Citation

Thurman D. (Don) Rodgers is a native of Cookeville, Tennessee, and in 1957, graduated from Tennessee Tech with a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering. He holds an advanced degree in Public Administration from the University of Northern Colorado, and in 1990, attended the John F. Kennedy School program for Executives in National and International Security at Harvard University. He is also a graduate of the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

After his graduation from Tech in 1957, General Rodgers entered the U.S. Army as a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. His early assignments included duty at company and battalion level in the United States, Europe, and, on two occasions, Vietnam. In subsequent assignments while still a junior officer, he served with the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as a personnel assignment officer for the Army, both while assigned to Washington, D.C.

In 1976, General Rodgers again returned to Washington D.C. after commanding a battalion in South Korea. This time he was assigned to the office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, responsible for the Army's liaison with Congress. In August 1977, he returned to Europe, this time to Germany with the Army's 7th Signal Brigade serving as its commander from 1979 to 1981.

In follow-on assignments, General Rodgers commanded the Army Communications System Agency in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, served as the project manager responsible for procuring and fielding Army communications equipment, and commanded the Communications Electronics Engineering Installation Agency at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

From September 1983 to June 1986, he served as the Commander of the U.S. Army Signal School at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He concurrently served as the Commanding General of Fort Gordon. During this time frame, General Rodgers was responsible for developing the case for and selecting a communication system

which would replace the Army's aging tactical communication system with state-of-the-art equipment. This several billion dollar system called MSE has been fielded and was used with outstanding results in Exercise Desert Shield/Storm.

More recently, General Rodgers served as the assistant Chief of Staff for Information Management and as the Director of Information Systems for Command, Control, Communications and Computers, Department of Army. From June 1988 to June 1990, he commanded the Army Information System Command, a global communications command located at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. As the commander of the largest military organization of its kind in the world, he managed a work force of some 50,000 personnel in more than a dozen overseas nations and throughout the United States.

His last assignment was as the Director of Defense Information System Agency (DISA) and the Manager of the National Communications System (NCS). As the Director of DISA, he oversaw the worldwide communication and information systems for the Department of Defense, and as Manager of the NCS, he was responsible for assisting the President and his key staff in the planning and provisioning of national security and emergency preparedness telecommunications for the Federal Government.

General Rodgers has commanded at every level in the Army from platoon through company, battalion, brigade, post, to a major Army command. His awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, several Vietnam awards and the French Order of National Merit. General Rodgers was also awarded the Joint Staff and the Army General Staff Identification Badges. He is a qualified parachutist and Army Ranger.

General Rodgers has served on the Board of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, the Board of Directors of National Science Center, and in 1982, was honored as a Distinguished Alumni of Tennessee Tech. He retired in August 1991 after 34 years in the Army.



1992 Engineer of Distinction Don Rodgers receives his citation from Dean George Swisher and Dr. Wallace Prescott