

T. H. Karamessines, Ex-Chief

By Jean R. Hailey
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Thomas H. Karamessines, 61, who retired in 1973 as the CIA's deputy director for plans after six years of guiding the agency's worldwide clandestine operations, died of a heart attack Monday at his vacation home on Grand Lake, Quebec.

With the CIA since 1947, the year it was established, Mr. Karamessines came up through the ranks, serving as chief of several stations in Europe before taking charge of CIA covert operations.

The title of deputy director for plans later was changed to deputy director for operations. Mr. Karamessines' retirement from one of the top jobs in the CIA was voluntary and believed brought on, in part, by a severe back ailment.

Although the espionage operation he headed was sometimes referred to as the Department of Dirty Tricks, Mr. Karamessines did not play the role of the flamboyant spy.

"He was energetic, quiet and effi-

cient and widely respected by those who worked for him," David A. Phillips, a retired CIA official and author of "The Night Watch," a book on the CIA, said yesterday.

Another former CIA official, Cord Meyer Jr., who had worked closely with Mr. Karamessines, not his boss had shown "fairness, courage, patience and self-discipline in a really tough job. He was a very acute judge of human beings."

His was an administrative job that required extensive traveling. "He handled the most delicate missions with the utmost discretion," Henry Kissinger, then national security adviser, wrote at the time of Mr. Karamessines' retirement.

Mr. Karamessines was born in New York City. He graduated from Columbia University in 1938 and from its law school two years later. He served with Thomas F. Dewey as deputy assistant district attorney for New York County in 1941-42.

Mr. Karamessines then joined the Army and was commissioned in the Field Artillery Corps. He was selected for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor of the CIA, and served in London and Cairo during World War II.

Because of his knowledge of the Greek language and Greece (he was of Greek descent) he went on to serve in that country until 1947, before returning briefly to civilian life. He returned to federal intelligence work that same year.

In the late 1940s, he was sent back to Greece to manage U.S. intelligence activities during the civil war there. He also helped organize the CIA's counterpart organization in Greece.

After he left the CIA, Mr. Karamessines testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee, which was probing the CIA's role in a political espionage campaign against Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1970. Allende later was killed in a military coup in

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1970. He told of "heavy pressures" put on the CIA by top Nixon administration officials.

More recently, in April of this year, he was back before the Senate Intelligence Committee to protest its proposed charter for the CIA.

Mr. Karamessines said then that there had been abuses and mistakes by the CIA in the past, but that they were few in number and had been brought out at the earlier committee hearings.

He called the investigations of the agency in recent years "an inexcusable exercise in political sensationalism" and said he hoped that "out of the turmoil" would come a stronger rather than a weaker charter.

He suggested that Congress give the CIA better "cover" or official disguises abroad, that it impose prison penalties for the "unauthorized revelation or compromise" of CIA secrets, and that it permit the Senate and House intelligence committees to protect CIA employes from other congressional committees.

Mr. Karamessines had received a number of honors during his career. He was given the Bronze Star for his military service during the war, the National Civil Service League's Career Service Award and the CIA's highest award, the Distinguished Intelligence Medal.

Recently he had appeared on television in Ben Wattenberg's "In Search of the Real America."

He was on the board of governors of the Central Intelligence Retirees Association and belonged to the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.

He is survived by his wife, June, of the home in Falls Church; three daughters, Carol, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Susan, of Edmonton, Alberta and Laura O'Neill of Ottawa; two sisters, Diana Allen, of Falls Church, and Dorothy Blackwood, of Memphis, Tenn., and two grandchildren.

The family suggests that expressions of sympathy may be in the form of contributions to the Heart Fund.



THOMAS H. KARAMESSINES