

General Wayne Russell Allen

Date in office: Sept. 9, 1938 - December 1951



General Wayne Russell Allen was appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors as the County's first chief administrative officer (CAO) on Sept. 9, 1938. His duties as CAO were to handle all Board administrative details; coordinate, control and supervise all county departments and services.

Allen joined the County of Los Angeles as a purchasing agent on Nov. 24, 1936. His duties involved the procurement and distribution of supplies for county departments and special districts. In his first year as county purchasing agent, Allen bought more goods for less money than had been bought by any purchasing agent, saving the county hundreds of thousands of dollars. When he was appointed CAO, he also retained his responsibilities as the county's purchasing agent. Allen held both titles of CAO and purchasing agent from 1938 to 1950.

Allen was born Jan. 28, 1899 in Denver, Colorado. He received his degrees from the University of California Extension Division; U.S. Army School of Fire, Infantry School and General Staff College; Industrial College of Armed Forces, Washington, D.C.; (honorary) LL.D. College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, Los Angeles.

Allen was employed from 1915-1921 by the San Francisco-Oakland Terminal Rail Systems Purchasing Department; 1921-1932 was Key System Transit Company's purchasing agent/general storekeeper; 1932-1933 served as director for Key Systems; 1933-1936 director, East Bay Rail Systems, Ltd.; and 1934-1937, director Morris Plan Bank.

In 1941, during World War II, Allen was given a military leave of absence for the United States Army. Allen served as general purchasing agent for the European Theater of Operations. A member of General Eisenhower's staff, he was in charge of buying supplies for the United States Army, Navy, the Red Cross and war shipping administration. It was during this time that he reached the rank of brigadier general. President Harry Truman authorized the Distinguished Service Medal award to Allen for his work in the United States forces in Europe.

Upon his return from World War II, Allen resumed his position as chief administrative officer/purchasing agent. In 1951, the Board of Supervisors approved the elimination of the title purchasing agent, agreeing that it would allow Allen to devote all of his time and attention solely to the work of chief administrative officer, a job that was also known as "county manager". From 1941 to 1946 Allen served as chairman of the Allied Military Procurement Board. On Feb. 26, 1947, he was confirmed by Congress as permanent brigadier general of the line Officers Reserve Corps.

On Dec. 4, 1951, the Board of Supervisors granted Allen military leave when the Army requested his services as a principal assistant in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, Logistics and Supplies. In 1954, after being on military leave for three years, Allen officially retired from

County service.

In December 1975, at the age of 76, Allen passed away in Santa Barbara. He was survived by his wife, stepdaughters, a sister, and four grandchildren.

Among his lifetime achievements, awards and memberships were:

1916-1917 served on Mexican Border; 1917-1921, 1st Lieutenant Infantry; 1921-1941 as colonel, assisted in reorganization of Army Forces commanding San Francisco Bay 159th Regimented and L.A. 160th Infantry Company.

Awards: U.S. Distinguished Service Medal, Legion Of Merit, Bronze Star Medal; Medal Of Merit - California National Guard; Great Britain - Commander of British Empire; Commander, Legion of Honor; France - Chevalier of Legion of Honor, Order of Social Merit, Order of Commercial Merit, Croix de Guerre with Palm; Commander Order of Leopold II by Belgium; Royal Oak Crown by Luxembourg.

Memberships; 1934-1935 president, Purchasing Agents Association of Northern California; 1936-1937 and 1946-1947, national vice president, National Association of Purchasing Agents; 1941-1942 national vice president, National Association of Purchasing Agents Association of L.A.; (life) past commander, L.A. Post 810, American Legion; British Purchasing Officers Association, London, England; national vice president, Quartermaster Association of United States; president, Southern California Chapter, International City Manager Association, American Academy of Political and Social Science; Military Order of World Wars.

Clubs: 1946-47 - director, Saddle & Sirloin; Army & Navy (Washington, D.C.); Jonathan; Scabbard & Blade.