

**Dr. RANKIN A. CLINTON, JR**  
**Department of the Army Civilian, Retired**



Dr. Rankin A. Clinton served four years active duty in the US Air Force during the Korean War. After discharge, he finished his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and physics, and accepted a civil service appointment as a research physicist at the Army Ballistic Missile Agency (ABMA) (part of the Army Ordnance Missile Command), Redstone Arsenal. He worked on the Redstone; Juno (space launch vehicle); Jupiter; Pershing; Saturn I, II, III, IV; and the Jupiter target vehicle in support of early Nike-X and Nike Zeus Ballistic Missile Defense interceptors. During this period, he designed a special miss distance indicator and was the lead in the design of a radar-assisted guidance system that flew on the first western world satellite.

While in the ABMA, Dr. Clinton began to support military and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) evaluations of Soviet missile programs. In response to the growing foreign missile activity, the Missile Intelligence Office (MIO) of the ABMA was established, with Dr. Clinton as its Technical Director. In this position, Dr. Clinton was a pioneer both in rocketry and in the use of engineering techniques and principles to evaluate foreign weapons. He was a leader in recognizing the value of high-fidelity weapon simulation and computer-aided design techniques. MIO, under his direction, established an outstanding capability in scientific and technical intelligence analysis.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, he served temporarily as the leader of the Technical Evaluation Team. Under Dr. Clinton's leadership, the MIO handled several strategic issues. The first strategic issue for the new group was the assessment of the "strategic missile gap". Dr. Clinton led the team that established the Army position and concluded no missile gap existed. The second strategic issue for this group was the evaluation of a possible Soviet 100-megaton Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). Led by Dr. Clinton, MIO and the CIA demonstrated that no ICBM existed large enough to mount a 100-megaton nuclear weapon. The third strategic issue was the Cuban Missile Crisis. The CIA Director, Mr. John McCone, chose the Army missile intelligence team to lead the national team effort to evaluate the technical aspects of the Cuban missile problem. Dr. Clinton's work contributed to the abortive Soviet missile deployment in Cuba.

In 1983, when MIO became the Missile Intelligence Agency, Dr. Clinton was appointed its first civilian director. The next two years were a period of rapid change in the Army scientific and technical intelligence communities, leading to the 1984 establishment of

the Army Intelligence Agency (AIA) by consolidating the Missile Intelligence Agency, the Foreign Science and Technology Center, and the Intelligence Threat and Analysis Center. Dr. Clinton served as the first Acting Director of the new AIA and led the consolidation.

Dr. Clinton retired in 1985, but he remained in a number of intelligence-related functions. He was a member of the National Security Agency Advisory Board, an advisor to the Under Secretary of the Army, a member of several advisory panels relating to the Space Defense Initiative program, and a member of the National Research Council—US Space Command Board.

Among his many achievements, he was awarded the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, two Department of the Army Certificates of Achievement for Research and Development and the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal. In 2007, he was inducted to the US Air, Space, and Missile Defense Distinguished Civilian Wall of Fame.

Dr. Clinton was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 1988.



**Dr. Rankin Clinton, center, at the 2007 induction ceremony for the US Air, Space, and Missile Defense Distinguished Civilian Wall of Fame (US Army Space and Missile Defense Association photo)**