

## **MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD SARGENT ABBEY**

**Retired Aug. 1, 1971. Died Dec. 2, 2001.**

Major General Richard Sargent Abbey is commander of the 24th North American Air Defense Command Continental Air Defense Command region with headquarters at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. He is responsible for the air defense of part or all of nine Middle Western states and four Canadian provinces.

General Abbey was born in New York City in 1916. He graduated from Central High School in Washington, D.C., and attended the University of Alabama for one year. From July 1935 to June 1936 he served as a private in Headquarters Battery, 2nd Coast Artillery at Fort Monroe, Va. He entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in July 1936 and received a bachelor of science degree and commission as second lieutenant in June 1940. He attended basic and advanced flying schools at Randolph and Kelly fields, Texas, and received his pilot wings in 1941.

General Abbey became operations officer in April 1941 for one of the pioneer B-17 squadrons at MacDill Field, Fla., and logged 400 hours of flying time in this aircraft. His experience as a B-17 pilot qualified him to serve as a flight instructor for pilots who would fly the bomber in combat.

During World War II on Dec. 7, 1941, General Abbey reported to West Point to serve as senior ground school instructor at Stewart Field, N.Y. In November 1943 he attended the Central Instructor School at Lockbourne Army Air Base, Ohio, and then served three months as commandant of crews at the Combat Crew Training Center at Ardmore, Okla. He went to Italy in May 1944 and commanded the 49th Bombardment Squadron. He flew 29 combat missions over northern France, Italy, Germany and the Balkans, logged 250 combat hours and became deputy commander of the 2d Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force.

In March 1945 General Abbey was transferred to Washington, D.C., and assigned to the War Department general staff in the operations and plans division. Before leaving the general staff in 1948 he progressed to the position of executive officer, plans and operations division. He attended Georgetown University from August 1948 to February 1950 and earned a master of arts degree in international relations. From February 1950 to July 1952, he served on the joint strategic plans group in the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Abbey returned to Europe in 1952 as chief of the Air Force section, Military Assistance Advisory Group, in the Netherlands. He returned to the United States in August 1955 to enter the National War College at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. After graduation he served as a faculty member at the National War College for two years.

In July 1958 he was reassigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force as chief of the policy division, deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, and later held the position of assistant deputy director for policy.

General Abbey served from August 1959 to August 1960 as deputy commander 3575th Pilot Training Wing at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., and from October 1960 to March 1963 as commander, 3525th Pilot Training Wing, at Williams Air Force Base, Ariz. In March 1963 he was assigned as director, plans and policies, J-5, North American Air Defense Command, Ent Air Force Base, Colo.

In July 1965 General Abbey went to the Republic of Vietnam as the deputy chief of staff, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. In October 1966 he returned to Washington, D C, as assistant chief of staff for reserve forces, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. He assumed duties as director, Combat Operations Center, North American Air Defense Command/Continental Air Defense Command, Ent Air Force Base, Colo., in February 1968.

General Abbey became the first commander of the 24th NORAD/CONAD region with headquarters at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., upon its inception in November 1969 in conjunction with the NORAD forces realignment.

His military decorations include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters and the Croix de Guerre with Palm (France).

He was promoted to the temporary grade of major general effective Oct. 1, 1965, with date of rank April 4, 1961.

(Current as of Feb. 15, 1971)