



Maj. Gen. Charles I. Bennett Jr. *In*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES I. BENNETT, JR.

Upon completion of his high school education at Jacksonville, Florida he enlisted in the Army Infantry induction Center at Camp Blanding, Florida on 18 June 1941. Shortly thereafter, at his own request, he was transferred to the Army Air Corps and reassigned to Moffett Air Base, California to continue recruit training in that Arm of the Service.

His next assignment was as an aircraft mechanic (BT-13) at a small California town called Wasco pending completion of construction at Lerdo Air Base at Bakersfield, California to which he was shortly reassigned. From Lerdo Army Air Base he was reassigned as one of the initial enlisted cadre to Lemoore Air Base, California (now a major Navy installation) also as an aircraft mechanic. This designation really meant, of course, that I was highly skilled in changing spark plugs and draining fuel sumps.

At Lemoore Air Base he applied for and was accepted for Student Pilot training. He reported to Kelly Air Base on 21 December 1941. After completing pre-flight training at Kelly Air Base; Primary training at Cuero, Texas; Basic training at Brady, Texas and Advanced training at Lubbock, Texas he was graduated as a Staff Sergeant Pilot on 5 August 1942. Upon graduation, he was assigned to the 4th Ferry Group at Long Beach Air Base, California.

At Long Beach Air Base flew BT-13, AT-6, C-47, B-25, P-38, P-39, P-51, P-87, B-17, B-24 and two Lockheed Lodestar models as well as perhaps another one or two he cannot recall. At this time he completed requirements of and was awarded the instrument "Green Card" personally signed by General "Hap" Arnold, then Chief of Staff of the Air Corps.

Subsequently, he was placed on temporary duty to complete the B-17/B-24 Operational Training Unit curriculum at Homestead Air Base, Florida. On 24 December 1942 he was promoted Flight Officer and on 8 May 1943 was promoted 2nd Lieutenant. At that point he was transferred to what is now Dover Air Force Base, Delaware as a transport pilot (C-54) moving supplies and materiel from Delaware to Chabua, India for further air shipment to China.

He was subsequently reassigned to St. Mawgan, an English base on the Southwestern coast of England (Cornwall) where he flew the C-87, a passenger version of the B-24. His mission there was to infiltrate and exfiltrate personnel engaged in very sensitive matters in Africa and Italy. Subsequently, he was placed on temporary duty at Prestwick, Scotland to complete an instrument flying course centered on a new ILS system which required the pilot to complete landings under instrument conditions without ever seeing the ground.

In 1944 he was reassigned from St. Mawgan to Orly Air Base, France flying C-47s to supply troops and materiel to Army forces attacking Germany. On Christmas Day 1944, he on-loaded troops at Marseilles, France and off-loaded them at Metz in support of General Patton's operations at the Battle of the Bulge. He later learned that those troops were in the battle lines barely over an hour after being disembarked from his aircraft.

Also in 1944, at the time of the German surrender, he was assigned to Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, Europe as personal pilot to General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He continued in that position in Germany and in Washington, D.C. until General Eisenhower retired as Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

In September, 1947 he was assigned as Operations Officer of the First Special Missions Squadron at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C. now located at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. In October 1948, he was reassigned to Albrook Air Force Base, Panama Canal Zone. In June he became the Assistant Director of Operations with additional duties as Director of Intelligence.

In January 1952, he was reassigned to the Air Command and Staff School, Montgomery, Alabama as Assistant Adjutant, later Adjutant.

In September 1953 he was reassigned to the University of Pittsburgh to complete the Air Force Advanced Management Course. Upon completion of this assignment, he was reassigned to Headquarters, USAF as staff planning officer with the Strategic Studies Branch of the War Plans Division, Directorate of Operations.

From January 1958 to August 1958, he attended the United Kingdom Joint Services Staff College at London, England. His next assignment was as Plans and Programs Staff Officer in the Directorate of Programs, Headquarters, USAF in Europe at Wiesbaden, Germany. In July 1960 he was assigned duties as Chief, NATO 1 Division (Italy and Turkey), Directorate of Ballistic Missiles, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations.

He returned to Headquarters, USAF in July 1961 as Planning and Programming Officer, Deputy Directorate of Plans for War Plans, Deputy Chief of Staff Plans and Operations. In August 1964 he entered the National War College at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. Upon graduation from the National War College, he returned to Headquarters, USAF as Deputy Assistant Director of Plans for National Security Council Affairs. From May 1966 to August 1969, he was Executive to the Chief of Staff, USAF, General John Paul McConnell.

In August 1969, he was assigned as Chief of Staff, Seventh Air Force at Tan Son Nhut Airfield, Saigon, Vietnam.

In February 1971, he was reassigned as Commander, 47th Air Division, Castle Air Force Base, California and in June assumed duties as Commander, 93rd Bomb Wing at Castle Air Force Base. In January 1972 he assumed the duties of Vice Commander, 8th Air Force on Guam.

In June 1973, he returned to Headquarters, USAF as Deputy Director of Plans and retired on 1 July 1974.

His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal w/ two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit w/ one oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal w/ four oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal w/ one oak leaf cluster, the Army Commendation Medal w/ one oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Combat V Device, Brazil Medal of War, National Order of Vietnam Fifth Class, and the Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, Honor Class.