



GENERAL RUSSELL ELLIOTT DOUGHERTY

Retired Oct. 1, 1977. Died Sep. 7, 2007.

General Russell Elliott Dougherty is commander in chief of the Strategic Air Command and director of strategic target planning (Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff), at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. SAC is the nation's major nuclear deterrent force with bombers, tankers, reconnaissance aircraft and intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff coordinates United States nuclear war plans and develops the Single Integrated Operations Plan.

General Dougherty was born in Glasgow, Ky., in 1920. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University, the Law School of the University of Louisville and the National War College. In addition, General Dougherty holds an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Akron, an honorary doctor of science degree from Westminster College, and is an "Old Master" of Purdue University.

After serving in the FBI, General Dougherty entered active military service as an aviation cadet at the outbreak of World War II; previously, he had been a member of the 123d Cavalry, Kentucky National Guard. He received his commission and pilot wings in March 1943.

During World War II, he was an instructor pilot in the Air Training Command and later he served in the 3d Air Force in crew and instructor pilot duties, as a B-17 pilot, and on a B-29 combat crew. His post World War II assignments encompass varied duties in operational, maintenance, administrative, political/military and command duties in Air Force, joint, and international assignments.

In 1947 he served as a unit instructor with the Air Force Reserve at Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky., and in 1948 was transferred to the Far East Air Forces. While flying with the 19th Bombardment Wing, he served as staff judge advocate for the wing and later as assistant staff judge advocate for the 20th Air Force. In April 1950 he became the assistant staff judge advocate for FEAF Headquarters in Japan and, at the outbreak of the Korean War, was assigned to temporary duty in intelligence with FEAF.

General Dougherty returned to the United States in 1951 and was assigned to Air Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, as chief of the Appeals and Litigation Division, and as the assistant U.S. Air Force trial attorney for litigation arising out of Air Force procurement and contractual activities.

In December 1952 General Dougherty elected to leave the Judge Advocate General's Department for assignment to the Strategic Air Command and attended both B-29 refresher and KC-97 transition training. In June 1953 he began successive assignments in SAC as operations officer for the 303d Air Refueling Squadron; commander of the 303d Armament and Electronics Squadron; deputy chief of operations, 303d Bombardment Wing; and commander, 358th Bombardment Squadron, all at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. He was assigned to Headquarters 15th Air Force, SAC, as chief, Operations Division, where he planned the B-52 round-the-world flight, Operation Power Flite, in 1957. Later he became the deputy director of operations, Headquarters 15th Air Force.

He attended the National War College during 1959-60 and, following graduation, was assigned duty in Headquarters U.S. Air Force in the Office of the Deputy Director for War Plans. In April 1961 he was appointed deputy assistant director of plans for joint matters, and in February 1963 he was made the assistant director for plans for joint and National Security Council matters.

General Dougherty has had four assignments in joint and international duties. During 1964-65, he was the deputy director for plans and operations (J-3), Headquarters U.S. European Command, in Paris, France. During this assignment in November 1964, he was the United States' planner for the successful U.S./Belgian rescue operation at Stanleyville in the Congo. In August 1965 he returned to Washington as director, European Region, Office of the Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs). In July 1967 he again returned to Europe and served until August 1969 as director, J-5 (Plans and Policy) at Headquarters U.S. European Command, Stuttgart, Germany.

In September 1969 General Dougherty was again assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force where he served as the assistant deputy chief of staff, plans and operations, and in February 1970 became deputy chief of staff, plans and operations for the U.S. Air Force. He was assigned as commander, 2d Air Force, SAC, with headquarters at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., in April 1971. In this position, General Dougherty commanded the U.S. Air Force's largest numbered Air Force, consisting of the majority of SAC's B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers.

On May 1, 1972, General Dougherty was promoted to his four-star grade and assigned as chief of staff, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, headquarters of NATO's Allied Command Europe. He returned to the United States on Aug. 1, 1974, to become the eighth commander of the Strategic Air Command.

He is a command pilot and included among his military decorations and awards are the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Air Force Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal, and the Joint Service Commendation Medal for his tenure as the U.S. Air Force's operations deputy on the Joint Staff. He is a member of the Kentucky State Bar Association and the Bar Association of the U.S. Supreme Court.

(Current as of June 1976)