

MAJOR GENERAL NEIL L. EDDINS

Retired Jan. 1, 1984.

Major General Neil L. Eddins is chief of the United States Military Training Mission to Saudi Arabia.

General Eddins was born in Afton, Wyo., in 1931, where he graduated from Star Valley High School in 1950 and attended the University of Wyoming in Laramie that fall. The general completed Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va., in 1969, Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., in 1972 and graduated with honors from Shippensburg (Pa.) State College earning a bachelor of arts degree in political science in 1973.

He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in February 1951 and served as an air policeman and attained the rank of sergeant before entering the aviation cadet program in January 1953. He graduated as a distinguished graduate and received his commission as a second lieutenant in March 1954.

His first operational assignment was in June 1954 with the 452nd Fighter-Day Squadron at Foster Air Force Base, Texas. In August 1956 General Eddins served as an instructor pilot with the 45th Fighter-Day Squadron at Sidi Slimane, Morocco.

Upon returning to the United States in August 1957, General Eddins was a flight commander with the 405th Fighter-Bomber Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va. In May 1959 he was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Fighter Weapons School, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. While there he was an operational test and evaluation pilot, and instructor pilot. Subsequently he become slot man for the U.S. Air Force Aerial Demonstration Team (Thunderbirds) at Nellis Air Force Base from April 1959 to April 1961.

Following transition training in F-105s, General Eddins was assigned to the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing, Bitburg Air Base, Germany, and remained there until January 1965. He then returned to Nellis Air Force Base as an F-105 instructor pilot with the 4526th Combat Crew Training Wing.

In July 1966 he moved to the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, as a flight commander. While there he flew 100 missions over North Vietnam.

He returned to Nellis Air Force Base in November 1966 and in January 1967 became commander and lead pilot for the Thunderbirds.

From February to July 1969, General Eddins attended the Armed Forces Staff College. After graduation he was assigned to Headquarters Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base as chief, Fighter Training Division. In June 1971 he attended the Army War College and after graduation in June 1972, received a Bootstrap assignment to Shippensburg State College. Upon graduation the general transferred to Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., in June 1973 as deputy commander for operations with the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing.

He became vice commander of the 432nd Tactical Fighter Wing, Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, in March 1975. In June 1975 he returned to Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, and served as commander of the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing. When the wing moved to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in December 1975, he was again named its commander.

In May 1977 General Eddins returned to Tactical Air Command headquarters as assistant deputy chief of staff for logistics. He took command of the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, also at Langley Air

Force Base, in March 1978.

General Eddins was named special assistant to the commander, 552nd Airborne Warning and Control Wing at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., in May 1979 and in September 1979 he took command of the wing. He assumed his present duties in July 1981.

The general is a command pilot with 5,600 flying hours which includes 260 combat hours. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal (Air Force), Silver Star, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with four oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with 14 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal and Combat Readiness Medal.

He was promoted to major general Aug. 1, 1981, with date of rank April 1, 1978.

(Current as of March 1982)